

SASOM news

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BREAKING NEWS: OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM) is proud to announce another landmark achievement for the profession: the formal accreditation of the Master of Medicine (MMed) degree in Occupational Medicine at the University of Pretoria (UP). In a letter dated 23 February 2026, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) confirmed the programme’s accreditation. This achievement is the culmination of a dedicated multi-year effort spearheaded by SASOM Chair, Prof. Daan Kocks, and Prof. Deb Basu, Head of Department: Public Health Medicine, UP. The CHE accreditation confirms that this academic pipeline meets the rigorous requirements of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA), providing a robust foundation from which future occupational medicine specialists will emerge as accomplished clinicians and researchers.

SASOM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025: A YEAR IN REVIEW

SASOM held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Annual Conference on 15 November 2025 at the Marriott Hotel Fire & Ice!, Menlyn, Pretoria, Gauteng province, and its last Executive Committee (ExCo) meeting of the year on 14 November 2025. A report on the Conference was published in the last issue of *Occupational Health Southern Africa* in 2025.

The 2025 annual report, prepared by the SASOM National Office Coordinator, Ms Claudia Frost, and reviewed and presented by the SASOM 2025 National Secretariat, Drs Frank Fox and Itumeleng Ntatamala, covered the period 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025 and highlighted the following activities and outcomes for 2025:

SASOM National Office

- o SASOM office bearers for 2026: Prof. Daan Kocks (Chair), Dr André Kotzé (Vice Chair), Dr Frank Fox (Secretary), and Dr Geoffrey Tafaune (Treasurer).
- o As of 31 October 2025, SASOM had 357 members, including 11 honorary members. The membership base continues to consist largely of practising occupational medicine practitioners (OMPs) and affiliated professionals, demonstrating sustained professional relevance.
- o SASOM’s financial results for the period 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025 indicate a year of consolidation and disciplined financial stewardship. SASOM continued its financial support of *Occupational Health Southern Africa* during the year, aligned with the shared objective of sustaining a credible and accessible scientific publication within the discipline.

SASOM Guidelines

Guidelines remain a core professional support tool for SASOM members, with consistently high download numbers and purchase activity during the reporting period. The most frequently accessed guidelines include Fee Structures and Practices, Medical Requirements for Fitness to Drive, Vision Testing, Spirometry in the Workplace, and Medical Surveillance Procedures. Ongoing updates and accessibility improvements remain a priority.

SASOM website, member portal, and digital security

- o Members gained the ability to download certificates directly from their SASOM accounts.
- o Website analytics confirmed that the ‘Member Login’, ‘OHSAA Journal’, and ‘Guidelines’ pages were the most visited.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events and chapter coordination

SASOM delivered a consistent and active CPD presence throughout 2025. This reflects strong commitment from chapters and volunteer leadership, despite earlier challenges relating to coordination, scheduling, and communication timelines.

SASOM chapter	Delivery format	Number of events
Western Cape	Monthly webinars	Many: continuous across 2025
KwaZulu-Natal	In-person CPD sessions	2
Northern Cape	Hybrid CPD session	1
SASOM National Office	Online and hybrid sessions	1 Annual Conference and AGM 4 ExCo meetings 2 international webinars

SASOM liaison – international, regional, and local

SASOM maintained strong collaborative relationships with major national and international stakeholders, including the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), the Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA), the South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN), the South African Medical Association – Private Practice Committee (SAMA-PC), CMSA, the Department of Employment and Labour (Ministerial and Technical Forums), the National Department of Health, *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, the International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative (IOMSC), and the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH).

Formal communication with organisations engaged in the enhancement of occupational health and medicine continued with SASOM ExCo members (co-opted) from the Compensation Commissioner (CC), Southern African Society of Travel Medicine (SASTM), Mine Medical Professionals Association (MMPA), NIOH, and ICOH.

Key liaison activities undertaken by the SASOM Chair, Prof. Daan Kocks, during the reporting period:

- o HPCSA stakeholder meeting, 15 July 2025, OR Tambo Airport: SASOM participated in a high-level engagement where the HPCSA reaffirmed that it functions as a regulatory authority rather than an employment-enhancement organisation.
- o Occupational Health and Safety Operational Planning Workshop, 29–30 July 2025, National Department of Health, OR Tambo Airport: the Department clarified that ‘occupational health’ is not included under the National Health Insurance (NHI) Act, but is governed by other national legislation, and that occupational medicine remains recognised as a medical practitioner function.
- o Engagement on the Role of Clinical Associates, July 2025: during the same workshop, the President of the Clinical Associates Forum requested SASOM’s guidance in integrating preventive occupational health components into their practice. SASOM responded formally in August 2025, indicating that SAMA could assist in developing an appropriate support framework.
- o Collaboration with SASOHN and SAMA, September 2025: SASOM contributed to the initiation of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and the establishment of a joint forum with SASOHN and SAMA. The objective is to coordinate with the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWESETA) in developing structured technician training programmes in vision testing, spirometry, and audiometry.
- o SASOM, an ICOH affiliate member, and Ms Claudina Nogueira, the ICOH National Secretary (NS) for South Africa, contributed information for the following ICOH requests, during Q1 and Q2 of 2025:
 - National list of occupational diseases – the official list in South Africa – for comparative analysis and for identifying emerging occupational health risks that may merit inclusion in the revised International Labour Organization (ILO) list, which will be updated from the 2010 version
 - ICOH survey on occupational biohazards post COVID-19, developed and undertaken by the ICOH Scientific Committee on Biohazards and Occupational Health (SC BOH)
- o In Q3 of 2025, the NS for South Africa participated in the following activities, undertaken collaboratively with ICOH:
 - ICOH-Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, UK (IOSH)-Lancaster University project on the delivery of occupational safety and health (OSH) services, by participating in a semi-structured interview to share the experience and situation in OSH service provision in the country
 - Global Insights: Mapping National Policies for Work-Related Psychosocial Hazards and Risks, by completing an online questionnaire via Qualtrics, focusing on national policies for psychosocial risks at work; and shared the survey link with other OSH experts and entities
- o Contributions from the NS for South Africa to the *ICOH Newsletter*, for the reporting period:

Volume 22 Number 3, December 2024:

 - In Memoriam – Dr Max Lum
 - Wrap-up article on the 34th International Congress on Occupational Health (ICOH2024) (including a link to a photographic account of ICOH2024)

- ICOH National Secretaries from the ‘Global South’ collaborate to host a webinar on ‘OHS in Mining’ (co-authored with Drs Diana Cuervo, Adolfo Hernández, and Norvil Mera Chú)
- News from SASOM, the ICOH affiliate member in Africa (content: SASOM National Roadshow 2024, and the launch of a new book on occupational lung diseases in the South African mining industry, authored by Dr Vanessa Govender)

Volume 23 Number 1, April 2025:

- SASOM Annual Conference 2024
- Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), the newest ICOH affiliate member (www.whwb.org)

Volume 23 Number 2, August 2025:

- Occupational Health of Informal and Migrant Workers – SASOM National Webinar

These linkages continue to strengthen SASOM’s role in policy discussions, academic development, and international occupational health collaboration.

SASOM also provides professional advice and support to members upon request. The Society is fortunate to have access to best-in-class OMPs and a qualified OMP with a Master of Laws degree (MLB) to offer comprehensive guidance on both legal and medical aspects of practice.

Colleges of Medicine of South Africa – College of Public Health Medicine Medals 2025

SASOM shared the announcement from the College of Public Health Medicine (CPHM) regarding the 2025 medal awards, and extended its heartfelt congratulations to the two Fellowship examination winners on their outstanding academic achievements:

- o FCPHM Henry Gluckman Medal: Dr Sayuri Pillay (University of Pretoria)
- o FCPHM Occupational Medicine SASOM Medal: Dr Yumna Williams (University of Cape Town)

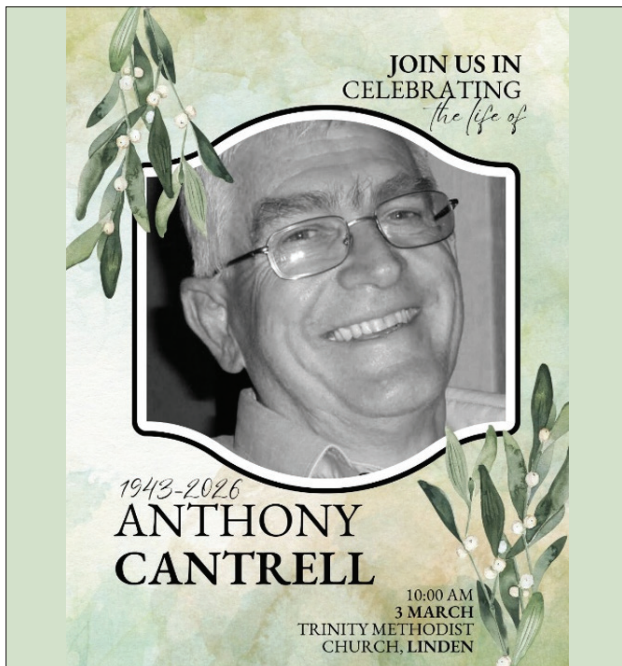
These medals are conferred on candidates who achieve the highest marks in the respective Fellowship examinations within a calendar year, provided a minimum threshold of 70% is attained. SASOM wishes Drs Pillay and Williams every success in their specialist careers, as well as all candidates who successfully completed their Fellowship examinations in 2025.

SASOM outlook for 2026

The 2024–2025 reporting period reflects measurable advancement alongside deliberate consolidation. Membership levels stabilised following the renewal cycle, CPD engagement remained strong and well supported, clinical guidelines continued to be widely accessed and utilised, and both operational resilience and governance systems were further strengthened. Looking ahead, SASOM’s focus for 2026 will include continued investment in guideline development, CPD delivery, digital systems, and deepened collaboration with national and international stakeholders.

IN MEMORIAM: PROF. ANTHONY CANTRELL (1943–2026)

It is with deep sadness that SASOM announces the passing of Prof. Anthony (Tony) Cantrell, a longtime colleague, friend, and a distinguished figure in occupational health in South Africa. Throughout his career, Tony was renowned for his generosity, kindness, and unwavering commitment to advancing knowledge in toxicology, industrial processes, information sciences, and occupational health education. His exceptional teaching and mentorship left a lasting



Photograph: courtesy of the Cantrell family

impact on generations of practitioners, students, and colleagues. Tony's contributions were instrumental in building capacity for sourcing and applying OSH information across southern Africa, benefiting workers, managers, health and safety representatives, union officials, and students alike.

Following his formal retirement after more than 30 years at the NIOH, Tony continued to serve the occupational health community as a mentor, advisor, and friend, remaining deeply engaged in professional societies and networks.

The leadership and members of SASOM extend their heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to Tony's family and loved ones. His professional legacy, personal warmth, and unique spirit will be remembered fondly, with respect and admiration. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

NEWS FROM THE GLOBAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ARENA

ICOH MIDTERM MEETING 2025

ICOH convened its Midterm Meeting in Naples (Napoli), Italy, from 20 to 22 October 2025. Ms Claudina Nogueira, ICOH NS for South Africa and ExCo member of SASOM, attended the meeting by invitation, and represented the Africa region.

Naples – a city of history, culture, and living heritage

The city's historic centre, an Historic Centre of Naples UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site, reflects over two millennia of layered Greek, Roman, Norman, Spanish, and Bourbon influence. Within walking distance lie architectural landmarks such as the Naples Cathedral (*Duomo di San Gennaro*), renowned for its Baroque splendour, and the *Castel dell'Ovo*, dramatically positioned along the waterfront. The nearby Royal Palace of Naples stands as a reminder of the city's former status as capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, while the National Archaeological Museum of Naples houses one of the world's most important collections of Greco-Roman antiquities, including treasures from Pompeii and Herculaneum. Beyond its monuments, Naples is celebrated for its dynamic street life, artistic traditions, and culinary heritage – notably as the birthplace of pizza – offering visitors a rich and memorable cultural experience alongside the formal meeting programme.

The meeting hosts and venue

The Midterm Meeting was made possible through the valued support of the Italian Workers' Compensation Authority (INAIL) and was hosted at the historic *Villa Colonna Bandini*, a distinguished 19th century villa located on the Colli Aminei, a hilly and verdant residential district overlooking Naples. Originally built in the early 1800s, during the Bourbon period, as a hunting residence associated with the nearby Royal Palace of Capodimonte, the villa later became the private property of Princess Bianca Doria Colonna of Avella, and was redesigned in an elegant neo-classical style by the Florentine architect, Antonio Niccolini. Surrounded by terraced gardens with diverse botanical species, the villa remains a refined example of Naples' aristocratic architectural heritage, and presents an evocative setting for cultural and institutional events.



'Come one, come all' – The ICOH Midterm Meeting brought together representatives of the organisation's leadership to review progress and strategic priorities in line with the current triennial work plan Photograph: courtesy of ICOH Secretariat, Italy



The historic *Villa Colonna Bandini*, an imposing 19th century villa, provided a fitting and evocative venue for the ICOH Midterm Meeting
Photograph: Claudina Nogueira (South Africa)



View across Naples from the meeting venue, *Villa Colonna Bandini* in the Colli Aminei: a sweeping panorama of historic rooftops, the Bay of Naples, and the commanding silhouette of Mount Vesuvius beyond
Photograph: Claudina Nogueira (South Africa)

The main event

ICOH Officers, Board Members, Chairs of Scientific Committees (SCs), and selected NSs participated in the proceedings. The gathering provided a structured forum to review progress and strategic priorities across ICOH’s SCs, NSs, Task Groups, and Working Groups, in line with the current triennial work plan. Delegations responsible for upcoming congresses presented forward-looking updates, including preparations for ICOH2027 in Mumbai, India, and ICOH2030 in Rome, Italy. A notable achievement during the meeting was the signing of an MoU between ICOH and the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM).

In keeping with tradition, a dedicated international scientific event was held on 21 October, titled ‘Global Roundtable on Priorities for the Future of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Services Delivery’. The session examined key findings from the research initiative, ‘Effective delivery OSH services: promoting OSH as a universal fundamental right at work’. The project was funded by the IOSH (UK), led by Prof. Stavroula Leka and her team at Lancaster University, with ICOH contributing as a project partner. The presented findings were the preliminary results from the third ICOH Survey on Occupational Health Services, administered by ICOH to its NSs. The extended results from the survey will be presented in an official ICOH report and included in the ICOH Triennial Report to be published at the time of the ICOH2027 Congress in Mumbai.

Complementing the scientific programme, delegates enjoyed a thoughtfully curated cultural evening, highlighted by a visit to the renowned sculpture, *The Veiled Christ*, housed in the Cappella Sansevero in central Naples (<https://www.museosansevero.it/en/the-chapel-and-the-veiled-christ/the-veiled-christ>). Created in 1753 by the Neapolitan sculptor Giuseppe Sanmartino, the masterpiece is celebrated for its extraordinary depiction of a life-size figure of the dead Christ beneath a delicately carved marble shroud. The transparency and fluidity of the ‘veil’, sculpted from a single block of marble, have long astounded viewers and are regarded as pinnacles of Baroque artistry. Beyond its extraordinary craftsmanship, the sculpture evokes powerful emotions and a sense of contemplative calm, securing its place among Naples’ most revered works and leaving a lasting impression on all who view it. This cultural experience provided a reflective pause, connecting the meeting’s professional themes with the enduring creativity, devotion, and human expression captured in Naples’ artistic heritage.

No visit to Naples would be complete without acknowledging the city’s dramatic setting. Dominating the Bay of Naples and visible from many vantage points throughout the city, the active volcano, Mount Vesuvius, stands as both a symbol of natural power and a reminder of resilience – its historic eruptions having shaped the region’s landscape and history for centuries. Bathed in changing light from morning to dusk and framed by terraced gardens, historic streets, and the shimmering bay, the view of Mount Vesuvius leaves a lasting impression, reinforcing Naples as a city where history, culture, and the forces of nature converge – an inspiring backdrop to the work of the delegates of the ICOH Midterm Meeting.

Second Announcement of the ICOH2027 Congress

The second announcement of the ICOH2027 Congress has been released. Themed *Occupational Health, Safety and Environment – Growth and Sustainability in Changing Times*, the Congress will bring together leading researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from



‘United Nations selfie’ at the ICOH Midterm Meeting – L to R: Dr Rosa Maria Orriols, Spain (Chair: ICOH Scientific Committee on Occupational Hygiene); Ms Claudina Nogueira (ICOH National Secretary for South Africa); Prof. Shyam Pingle, India (ICOH Vice President for National Secretaries); and Prof. Frida Marina Fischer, Brazil (Chair: ICOH Working Group on Demographic Changes, Inequalities and Future of Decent Work)
 Photograph: Rosa Maria Orriols (Spain)

around the world to exchange knowledge and advance OSH at the largest global gathering in occupational health. The scientific programme has been developed through the active engagement of the 37 SCs of ICOH, together with the Board and the Regional and National Secretaries. Plenary speakers, selected from among internationally recognised leaders, will share their insights and perspectives on key developments in OSH.

Through a diverse programme of plenary and semi-plenary sessions, special and oral presentations, a Global Policy Forum, poster sessions, workshops, and symposia, the Congress will explore a broad range of emerging challenges and innovative solutions in OSH. The programme will highlight local, regional, and global initiatives and research, providing delegates with valuable opportunities to exchange ideas, strengthen international networks, and contribute to lasting collaborations beyond the Congress itself.

Registration and the call for abstracts are now open and available at: <https://www.icoh2027.in/index.html>

Important dates: ICOH2027 Congress

Opening of early bird registration	December 2025
Opening of call for abstracts	December 2025
Closing of abstract submission	Extended to 22 May 2026
Abstract acceptance notification	14 July 2026
Closing of early bird registration	15 August 2026
Closing of mid-term registration	30 November 2026
ICOH2027 Congress opening ceremony	14 February 2027

ICOH webinars

The most recent instalment of the ICOH Webinar Series, titled 'Mental health at work: breaking paradigms and building healthy workplaces', was held on 22 January 2026. The webinar was co-organised by the ICOH NSs for Peru (Dr Norvil Mera Chú) and South Africa (Ms Claudina Nogueira), and the São Paulo Association of Occupational Medicine (APMT, Brazil), an ICOH affiliate member. ICOH members in good standing have free access to the ICOH Webinar Series, while non-ICOH members are charged a small fee for participation. The topics and presenters were:

- 'Psychosocial risks and digitalisation': Dr Quentin Durand-Moreau, ICOH Board member (University of Alberta, Canada)
- 'Strategies for psychosocial risk management: good practices in Indonesia': Dr Nuri Purwito Adi (University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia)
- 'Psychosocial risks at workplaces: experiences and impacts inside companies in Peru': Dr John Astete (National Centre for Occupational Health and Environmental Protection for Health (CENSOPAS), Lima, Peru)
- 'Psychosocial risks at workplaces: experiences and impacts inside companies in Brazil': Prof. João Silvestre Silva Junior (University of São Paulo Medical School, Brazil)

The presentations were followed by an engagement session between presenters and participants to end the webinar.

The ICOH SC on Aging and Work organised and presented a free webinar, titled 'Chronic diseases and labour underutilization in the (potential) workforce', on 30 January 2026. The topics and presenters were:

- 'Determinants of different forms of labour underutilization in the Netherlands: a nationwide study': Dr Sander van Zon (University of Groningen and Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research)
- 'Impacts of different measures of health on labour market exit': Dr Raun van Ooijen (University of Groningen)

The free webinar, 'Occupational risk factors in outdoor workers: UV, heat stress and others' was presented on 12 February 2026, as a collaboration between three ICOH SCs, viz. Occupational Medicine (SC OM), Occupational and Environmental Dermatoses (SC OED), and History of Prevention of Occupational and Environmental Diseases; and the ICOH NS for Peru, Dr Norvil Mera Chú. The topics and speakers were:

- 'Occupational risk factors in outdoor workers: skin diseases and cancer': Dr José Hernán Alonso (Norway), Chair of the SC OED
- 'Climate change and outdoor exposure: impact on workers' health': Dr Loubna Tahri, ICOH NS for Morocco
- 'Heat stress: current challenges for medical surveillance at workplaces': Dr Brett Shannon (USA), member of the SC OM steering committee
- 'Heat stress and outdoor worker exposure: lessons from the past, challenges still in the present': Esteban Arias (Costa Rica), lead hygienist and vice president for health and hygiene at La Isla Network (<https://laislanetwork.org/>).

Repository for Publications on Basic Occupational Health Services and Similar Initiatives: sharing an updated version of a free digital resource

An astounding 85% of workers worldwide lack access to expert-based occupational health services. To assist in remedying this situation, the Learning and Developing Occupational Health (LDOH) Foundation (<https://ldoh.net/>) has recently released the second edition (2025) of the free digital resource *Repository for Publications on Basic Occupational Health Services and Similar Initiatives*, authored by Drs Frank van Dijk (the Netherlands) and Suvarna Moti (India), both active and long-term members of the ICOH SC on Education and Training in Occupational Health (SC ETOH).

Over the past two years, the repository has been substantially expanded and refined. The number of publications added has doubled from the first edition (2022), while the overall readability has been improved and a structured keyword search system has been developed to facilitate easier navigation and retrieval of information.

The repository provides access to a wide range of materials that are often difficult to locate, including scientific articles, books, reports, lecture abstracts, and policy documents produced by major international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA), and ICOH.

The collection covers the period from approximately 2000 to 2024. Each of the 365 records includes full bibliographic details, a brief description or abstract (where permitted), and a direct link to the full publication, with approximately 90% of the sources accessible online.

The compendium is largely based on systematic literature searches, and serves as a useful starting point for targeted enquiries by professionals, researchers, and students. It provides information on current knowledge and practice, drawing on studies from more than 45 countries. The repository also includes selected materials on informal workers, participatory approaches, and key publications in ergonomics.

In addition, the resource provides background information on the concept and implementation of basic occupational health services (BOHS) and related innovations. Its aim is to support improved access to occupational health services and to contribute to the advancement of occupational healthcare for all workers.

The LDOH Foundation is an international not-for-profit organisation located in the Netherlands. Its mission is to support professional education in OSH and promote occupational health for all workers. The LDOH website offers information on the objectives of the foundation, staff, products, an e-library of learning materials, and a web shop. The resource is accessible at no cost from <https://shop.ldoh.net>. 