



SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF PSYCHIATRISTS

# SASOP FIRST QUARTER UPDATE

Anusha Lachman

Dear Colleagues

It has been a pleasure to step into the role of SASOP President at the National Conference in November 2023 in Cape Town.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our new Board of Directors for availing themselves to serve in their respective leadership roles. As a reminder of the executive SASOP BOD members at your service:

- President Elect: Dr Anersha Pillay, neuropsychiatrist, private practice
- Past President: Dr Sebo Seape, adult psychiatrist, private practice
- Secretary: Dr Alicia Porter, child & adolescent psychiatrist, state sector
- Treasurer: Dr Thupana Seshoka, adult psychiatrist, state and private
- Public Sector Convenor: Dr Thuli Mdaka, adult psychiatrist, state and private
- PsychMG private practice convenor: Dr Melane van Zyl, adult psychiatrist, private
- COO of SASOP: Dr Mvuyiso Talatala, adult psychiatrist, state and private

**MY KEY PRIORITIES FOR THIS TERM OF OFFICE ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

**1. CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH**

- As a child psychiatrist I am committed to prioritizing the agenda for CAMH services, support and development in the country and with an extension to the continent. There is an opportunity for us as SASOP to focus not only on service provision but to focus on early screening, awareness, partnerships with advocacy groups and driving for better medical insurance coverage.



Anusha Lachman

**Action:**

- To this end, we have already commenced with active engagement from the CAP SIG members first statement on Transgender Care for C&A (released March 2024), and they will be contributing to the discussions on care pathways for CAP alongside the adult pathways.

**2. ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH:**

- SASOP has not traditionally been associated



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with research or significant academic input apart from our mentorship and support for the Diploma in Mental Health preparation and the Registrar Finishing School.

- Data drives decision making and we are obliged to contribute to this if we are to meaningfully influence policy and protocols in SA.
- My second focus will be to enable support and collaboration within this area – both in private and public sectors.
- Targeted goals include:
  - a) A Research Hub – support that will enable registrars to seek out assistance from SASOP to help complete their MMed Dissertations to facilitate their full registration at psychiatrists. This hub will also be available to any SASOP member who requires support to engage in any research projects within their practices.
  - b) Publications – with the support of a science writer, and editorial assistance, we will be in a position to assist with building up a publication base for clinical and scientific work of SASOP to contribute to the local literature.
  - c) Support for supervisors of MMed and MPhil Students, including workshops and upskilling in the task at hand.
  - d) The creation of Training Institutes to facilitate SASOP led partnerships to advance training and upskilling of the psychiatric workforce, including accreditation of courses for allied health professionals, GPs and other specialists who wish to further their mental health training.

### Action:

- On the 15 March 2024, we hosted a dinner for the Funding and Pharmaceutical Industry to engage with our goals from the current BOD and we look forward to meaningful partnerships specifically related to our academic and research focus.
- I have met with the Editor of the SAJP Professor Jonathan Burns, and we have made progress on welcoming a new Editor of the SAJP – Prof Bonginkosi Chiliza (UKZN)
- We will also notify the membership of the new editorial board of the SAJP, which we hope will reflect the diversity and representation of our membership.

### 3. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

- SASOP in the words of our late past President Prof Bernard Janse van Rensburg “needs to be a flagship for what a social contract is all about”.
- As an organization we are leaders in highlighting our social justice voice
- My final focus will be on steering this social responsibility into the direction of more effective science communication.

This will take the form of more thoughtful, clear messaging of mental health issues, tackling misinformation in the media and taking the lead in the public forum for effective science communication for psychiatry.

### Action:

- We are engaging with our PR and media company Jigsaw to facilitate a more targeted and clearer social and broadcast media focus in the next 2 years with novel topics

I look forward to engaging with the membership of SASOP as we embark on an exciting two years ahead. I would like to also remind our membership that amongst all the pressure and inevitable strain of the profession, we need to remember to serve as a mirror to our colleagues, patients and service providers – as an example of what courteous, kind, respectful and empathic professionalism can look like.

I welcome any feedback and ideas, thoughts or reflections throughout my term – email me directly at [anusha.sasop@gmail.com](mailto:anusha.sasop@gmail.com)

Warm Regards

**Anusha Lachman**  
**SASOP President 2023-2025**

### Directors:

Dr A Lachman (President)  
 Dr T Mdaka (Public Sector Convenor)  
 Dr A Pillay (President-Elect)  
 Dr A Porter (Honorary Secretary)  
 Dr S Seape (Past-President),  
 Dr T Seshoka (Honorary Treasurer)  
 Dr M van Zyl (Private Sector Convenor) ■



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# SAVE THE DATE ROADSHOW 2024

PHARMADYNAMICS HAS AGREED TO SPONSOR ANOTHER ROUND OF SASOP/PSYCHMG ROADSHOWS IN 2024.

**T**his year the focus will be on development of the subgroups and developing leadership at a local level.

There will be a workshop for the subgroup committee with identified younger leaders in the first part of the meeting, which will be followed by a workshop for all members where any emergent issues will be discussed over brunch/dinner.

There will also be feedback from the boards of SASOP and PsychMg.

**Please diarise the dates the dates below.**

Opportunities to register with details of venues and starting times will follow shortly.

**DATES FOR ROADSHOW 2024:**

- Wednesday 08.05.2024 FS/Bloemfontein (afternoon/evening meeting)
- Friday 31.05.2024 Nelspruit (afternoon/evening meeting)
- Wednesday 12.06.2024 KZN/Durban (afternoon/evening meeting)

- Saturday 27.07.2024 Cape Town (morning meeting)
- Wednesday 14.08.2024 PE/Gqeberha (afternoon/evening meeting)
- Thursday 15.08.2024 East London (afternoon/evening meeting)
- Saturday 14.09.2024 Gauteng (combined Northern and Southern with Northwest) (morning meeting)
- Wednesday 09.10.2024 Southern Cape (George) (afternoon/evening meeting)
- Saturday 02.11.2024 Limpopo (morning meeting) ■

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HEALTH ACROSS THE DIASPORA**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Conference** | November 7-11, 2024  
*Nairobi Serena Hotel*

**Safari** | November 11-13, 2024  
*Amboseli Safari*



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# 24<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONGRESS OF PSYCHIATRY

The 24<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Psychiatry (WCP 2024) will be held on 14-17 November in Mexico City. The four-day event offers a dynamic platform for collaboration and dialogue with mental healthcare peers.

You'll leave reinvigorated and ready to elevate your career. Be among the first to hear cutting-edge insights from experts, gain access to emerging data, and grow your professional network by connecting

with those facing similar challenges. The World Psychiatric Association (WPA) unites 140 psychiatric societies across 120 countries, supporting over 250,000 psychiatrists and fostering specialized collaborations in the field of psychiatry.

Take an active role and shape the program by submitting an abstract.

For more information, visit: <https://wcp-congress.com/>



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## 24<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONGRESS OF PSYCHIATRY

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