



SANRA UPDATE

SOUTHERN AFRICAN NEUROLOGICAL REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 673, MONDEOR, 2110

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Dear Colleague

We haven't always been too good at communicating with our members, but SANRA is still up and running! The past two years have presented a few challenges, but we have also been able to make some major achievements.

The 2007 Conference

The 2007 conference, held jointly with the SA Spinal Cord Association in Durban was a great success. The ICC didn't meet all of our expectations as a venue, but those of us who were at the conference all agree that it was a wonderful opportunity to network with colleagues in rehabilitation and to get excellent scientific input across disciplines.

This was the third conference organised by SANRA, and we are already planning our fourth, a stand alone one, which will be held in Gauteng in 2009. It was truly inspiring to see how much rehabilitation has grown and matured since we took our first, hesitant, interdisciplinary steps in 2004. It was also good to see the increasing participation from the Department of Health, the Road Accident Fund and the Compensation Commissioner.

A new committee was elected at the AGM. The committee members are as follows:

- Dr Nilesh Patel (Rehab doctor) (Chairman)
- Dr Hugh Staub (Rehab neurologist) (Chairman-elect)
- Brian Mallinson (neuropsychologist) (treasurer)
- Dilys Jones (speech-language therapist) (secretary)
- Ashika Kaliyan (rehab nursing sister)
- Elma Heyns (occupational therapist)
- Dr Michelle van Zyl (rehab doctor)
- Dr Elana van Brakel (rehab doctor)
- Jagrati Ratanjee (occupational therapist)
- Rushdah Johardien-Parker (physiotherapist)
- Retha Nienaber (physiotherapist)
- Marc Naidoo (physiotherapist)
- Mosa Kekana (occupational therapist)
- Tamsyn Bernath (speech-language therapist)

A sincere thank you to these people for their willingness to help. It is easy to criticise and complain, and much more difficult to get involved! Any organisation is only as good as the people in it. There are so many creative, dynamic and committed people in rehabilitation that we believe we have the potential to be a very strong group.

Membership Fee

A motion to introduce a membership fee was proposed and accepted at the AGM. We need to accumulate some money to cover administrative costs (such as the committee teleconferences, postage etc) and for conference start up costs, and it was thus decided to introduce a membership fee of R100 per year. For ease of administration, a fee of R200 will be levied to cover the period from one conference to the next (two years). Many people have already paid at the conference in Durban. To assist us in updating our records, please complete the attached membership form, including your receipt number. If you wish to pay, please refer to the banking details on the form.

World Federation for Neurological Rehabilitation

We have been invited to join the World Federation for Neurological Rehabilitation, which has recently hosted its first international conference. This is a new organisation which aims to foster communication between people involved in rehabilitation. As members, we will receive the federation newsletter, and will have the opportunity to participate in the special interest groups which fall under the umbrella of the World Federation.

Research Workshop 2008

If rehabilitation as a discipline is to survive and develop, we need to be actively involved in our own clinical research. One of the things we've realised in organising the SANRA conferences is that there are a lot of people with a lot of excellent ideas who don't feel confident enough to undertake research. For that reason, we will be running a full day clinical research workshop early this year.

Professor Claire Penn, who is a National Research Foundation (NRF) A-rated scientist, with a wealth of experience in cross disciplinary research, has agreed to present the workshop. It will cover areas such as why we should do research, how to go about formulating a research question, selecting the appropriate methodology for the research project, the ethics of research and how to prepare research for presentation and publication. The full details for the workshop will be circulated shortly.

Website

We are in the process of developing a website which we hope to have up and running by early this year. One of the things which we hope to be able to include on the website and in our newsletters is a list of resources. If you are involved with a support group or similar organisation for adults with neurological impairments, please forward the details to us. There are many excellent groups out there, but we all know how difficult they can be to access. Similarly, if you are involved in a research project, or have details of useful courses or conferences, this would be a good forum in which to share the information.

A Final Thought

Let us consider the words of Mark Ylvisaker, one of the keynote speakers at our 2005 conference: *"Rehabilitation is more than the mechanical application of technical procedures...". It involves a commitment to enter the lives of people with disability, to create collaborative relationships with them and the everyday people in their lives, and to support them in part by serving as an ongoing source of optimism, creativity, flexibility and enthusiasm in the face of obstacles that often seem overwhelming*" (Ylvisaker and Feeney, 1998, p xi)

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