

South African Young Academy of Science

2017 Report

Connecting Science and Society since 2011

The South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) was founded in September 2011 to be the representative voice of young scientists in South Africa. SAYAS aims to contribute to the national strategic priority of strengthening the skills and human resource base of the country, with a focus on the next generation of scientists. Since its inception, SAYAS has inaugurated 69 members¹ who were selected based on their academic excellence and service to society.

This report reflects on the progress made towards achieving those goals in 2016/17. More details can be found at www.sayas.org.za



Report compiled by:
Edith Shikumo

¹ The 20 founding members as well as the 2012 members are now SAYAS Alumni

Improving scholarly environment Annual Young Scientist Conference 2016

Leader: ASSAf and SAYAS Secretariat

The Annual Young Scientists Conference (AYSC) was initiated by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), in 2010, in response to the need for human capital development, in particular the development of the next generation of highly skilled young people who can advance the growth of the economy and improve the quality of life in South Africa and the African continent at large. The AYSC serves as a platform for young scientists to present their research work; nurture dialogue between science, politics and society; facilitate collaboration and networks between young scientists; and, foster inter- and trans-disciplinary scientific analysis and identify future needs.

Human rights came under scrutiny at the 7th Annual Young Scientists' Conference on 6 to 7 October 2016 at the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre. The conference was hosted by ASSAf, the Department of Science and Technology (DST), SAYAS, Gender in Science, Innovation, Technology and Engineering (GenderInSITE), the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World -South Africa National Chapter (OWSD-SANC), and the Foundation for Human Rights (FHR). The conference theme, Human Rights, was aligned to the 2016 African Union Year Theme of Human Rights with Special Focus on Rights of Women.

Retired Judge Richard Goldstone gave the opening remarks and Ms Yasmin Sooka, Director, FHR gave the keynote address. The two later joined other panellists in a Panel Discussion on: Redress of Colonial Heritage in Promoting Human Rights in Africa. The discussion was facilitated by Prof Alex Broadbent – Executive Dean of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg and SAYAS member. The other panellists included

Prof Bongani Majola – former Assistant Secretary-General and Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and Commissioner Mohamed Ameerma from the South African Human Rights Commission.

In setting the tone for the inter-disciplinary conference, Judge Goldstone qualified that: "Lawyers generally think that the topic of human rights is their domain, but nothing could be further from the truth."

In addressing the Redress of Colonial Heritage, Ms Sooka sought to also interrogate traditional African practices that were equally harmful saying: "traditional custom is not static but changes continuously. Engagement and dialogue are essential to promote a universal set of values, as tradition cannot justify human rights violations".

The conference also included a Round-Table Discussion focusing on: Transformation towards Sex and Gender Equality in Africa on the evening of 6 October, sponsored by the FHR. The Panellists included eminent persons in the Human Rights field inclusive of retired Judge Richard Goldstone, retired Judge Zak Yacoob, Prof Christof Heynes – Member, United Nations Human Rights Committee, Ms Janet Love – Executive Director, Legal Resource Centre and Prof Barney Pityana, ASSAf Council Member. This event was open to the public.

Human rights are inherent rights of all human beings regardless of nationality, sex, race, religion, language or any other status. In South Africa, the Bill of Rights forms the cornerstone of democracy. The Bill of Rights enshrines the rights of all people in South Africa and affirms the democratic values and principles of human dignity, equality and freedom. In order to achieve these values in South

Africa and in the African continent in general, citizens have to promote and respect the culture of human rights. In addition, they should promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights.

The highlight of the Conference however were the presentations and discussions by young scientists. It provides a platform for young scientists to share their research and also sharpen their presentation skills. The networking opportunity is also a big draw card as this provides suitable grounds for seeking out inter-disciplinary collaborations.

Traditionally, the conference has included capacity development components such as scientific writing and

publication, communication and science engagement, and opportunities to interact with senior officials in government and science councils.

The closing dinner on 7 October, provided further stimulus for the young scientists with an impromptu debate on the merits of *Ubuntu* and a further interrogation of the #Feesmustfall protests. The fiery but friendly debate saw a banter of thought facilitated by Prof Himla Soodyall, between retired Judge Zak Yacoob and Mr Joel Modiri from University of Pretoria's Department of Jurisprudence. Mr Modiri and Ms Angela Mudukuti from the Southern Africa Litigation Centre gave the closing remarks.





Science and Society

Project Leader: Makondelele Makatu, University of Venda

According to the *South African June 2014 labour force survey*, 36.1 percent of young people between the ages of 15 and 35 are unemployed, which is almost double the 15.6 percent of adults aged between 35 and 64 who are unemployed. The New Growth Path stipulates the following as the main challenges hampering young people from meaningfully participating in the mainstream economy: joblessness, poverty and inequality. It is therefore imperative that disadvantaged youth be empowered through effective institutions and policies to overcome conditions that disadvantage them.

Dr Makatu's project focuses on developing responsible citizenship amongst in-school youth from the adopted school in Makhado Municipality, Limpopo Province. The main purpose of the project is to identify the known skills and resources that if adopted and utilized can build more responsible youth in our society. The voices of the in-school youth are more important in informing the programme that will be developed for their benefit. University students were identified and trained to participate positively in training in-school youth. Such university students shared amongst themselves their understanding of responsible citizenship and the skills that if employed by in-school youth will benefit them

and make them responsible citizens in their schools and communities. The same instrument, used for university students was also found useful for the in-school youth whose project is intended for.

Dr Makatu's project is therefore timely if we are to enable the optimal development of young people, both as individuals and as members of South African society, enhancing their capabilities to transform the economy and the country. Dr Makatu was awarded some funding from SAYAS through the Working Groups project. Funding support has been provided by the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust (OMT).

Feeding the pipeline 1000 Girls – 1000 Futures

Project Leaders: Caradee Wright, Amanda Weltman, Christine Tshabalala
A UNESCO report (Access: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/LAYOUTS/UNESCO/women-in-science/index.html#overview!lang=en>) indicates that just 28% of the world's researchers are women. The percentage is pegged at 30% in Sub-Saharan Africa. While more women are enrolling in university, relatively few pursue careers in research. There are many leaks in the pipeline – from stereotypes encountered by girls to the family-caring responsibilities and bias women may face when choosing a career.

The 1000 Girls - 1000 Futures Program is a world-wide effort that pairs motivated, enthusiastic mentors with smart, STEM-focused high school women and gives them access to innovative programming that will help them develop essential 21st century skills. We encourage female SAYAS members to sign on as mentors.

Successes of Mentoring - An acknowledgement by a mentee

By Tashmika Maharaj, Pretoria

Marie Curie once said: "Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained."

The mentoring program was first introduced to me as a method to empower women and girls in the field of Science. It was incredible to learn about powerful women and men in this wonderful field. However, it turned into much more than this. My mentor, Dr Caradee Wright, has become such an integral part of my life. She has been my mentor for 6 years and is one of the main reasons that I have been accepted into university to do a degree in science today. When I found myself in need of some advice or a helping hand I turned to her. And she would go the extra mile to help me. A mentor-mentee relationship, such as the one between Dr Wright and myself, encourages a type of friendship centered around learning new things as well as experiencing new things.

Being around Dr Wright and her colleagues has encouraged me to pursue my dreams in Science. Her helping hand has pushed me to persevere and to be confident in my endeavours. She taught me to believe that I was gifted for something and never to despair.

It is an honour to be a part of this program. All girls and boys should be given a mentor – it is a phenomenal experience for both mentor and mentee (especially when they are as wonderful as Dr Wright). I hope that one day I will be able to pass on Dr Wright's lessons and love to another young lady or young man.

For 2017, Tashmika is planning to study either Biomedical Engineering at Wits or BSc Biological Sciences at Tuks. She has chosen these courses as options as they are pathways into medicine. She noted that the direction given by Dr Wright has helped her in making her study choices and what possible career paths these could lead to.

Science Engagement with Young Learners

Continued engagements by Dr Caradee Wright at the Modiri High School in Garankuwa saw the participation of South African candidates attending the 67th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting engage with young scholars from their Science Club on 12 May.

This was held during a send-off meeting to introduce the five young South African scientists nominated by ASSAf to attend the prestigious 67th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting held on 11 to 12 May 2017 at the National Research Foundation's (NRF) Albert Luthuli Auditorium.

The South Africans will be among 400 young scientists from 76 countries selected to participate in this year's 67th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting on Chemistry in Lindau, Germany, from 25 to 30 June 2017.

Deserving young scientists are annually nominated to attend the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings which are designed

as a forum for young scientists from all over the world to have an in-depth exchange with Nobel Laureates.

Edith Shikumo from the SAYAS Secretariat facilitated the visit which served to inspire the young learners at Modiri High.

On 9 March 2017, Vonani Mabunda, Co-Founder and CEO of SCF Capital Solutions, accompanied Dr Wright to Modiri Secondary School in Ga-Rankuwa. Vonani told his compelling story to a large group of science club members; his story of where he began his studies in engineering and then when he had completed, took a sharp left into banking before realising that he wanted to do more for small-to-medium size enterprises and entrepreneurs in South Africa, so become an independent investment banker. Vonani answered numerous questions from the group of interested learners; in particular on the topic of changing your mind about what and who you want to be as you grow up!



Blogging

Project Leader: Aliza le Roux

In this age of growing social media attention, blogging has become very trendy. Other than being fashionable, blogs provide an opportunity to create relevant content for one's intended readership or customers. Blogs also provide a connection to global communities which provides insights and access to networks that can accelerate one's learning process, opportunity and success.

The SAYAS Blog therefore is an opportunity to connect to young scientists especially those doing research and PhD's, many of whom feel that the research phase tends to be lonely or isolated.

Following the successful launch of the SAYAS blog in April 2015, SAYAS has continued to identify skilled young scientists to contribute to the blog for a period of 12 months.

The January to December 2017 bloggers who have been contributing are: Siphokazi Nyeleka (University of Fort Hare), Mathapelo Seopela (Tshwane University of Technology) and Itumeleng Moroenyane (INRS-Centre Institut Armand-Frappier, Canada). This year had a difference in the form of a monthly Guest Contributor as well.

The blog can be accessed at www.sayasblog.com.

Roadshows

The main objective of conducting outreaches and roadshows is to raise awareness of young scientists opportunities available and raising the profile of SAYAS in order to increase membership uptake. This is especially in previously disadvantaged universities. We appeal to SAYAS members to assist in the planning of such outreaches at their various universities.

Roadshows undertaken included:

1. Initiative to Enhance the Capacity, Visibility and Participation of SAYAS in Eastern Cape Province

The following universities were visited by Mr Stanley Maphosa, ASSAf Liaison Manager and Ms Edith Shikumo from the SAYAS Secretariat.

23 February, 2017 – University of Fort Hare (UFH), Alice campus

-Meetings were held with the officers from the Research office, Faculty heads of Chemistry, Physics, Economics and Science and Agriculture, an interview on Forte Comm. Radio the university radio station was conducted and a meeting with post-grad students

24 February, 2017 – Water Sisulu University (WSU), Mthatha campus

-Meetings were held with the Vice Chancellor, the DVC Academic Affairs & Research, officers from the Research office and other Deans. A video conferencing facility was utilised to link the East London and Butterworth campuses

We were joined by Prof Philani Moyo and Dr Nosiphiwe Ngqwala at the UFH outreach. Dr Ngqwala was interviewed on Forte Comm. Radio the university radio station in Xhosa – SAYAS's first indigenous language interview.

From interactions with students, it was realised that they need encouragement from supervisors and lecturers to apply for opportunities. And further, if the latter could read through students' applications before submitting, it would increase uptake of opportunities and improved success rates. This speaks to SAYAS mandate in mentoring upcoming young scientists.





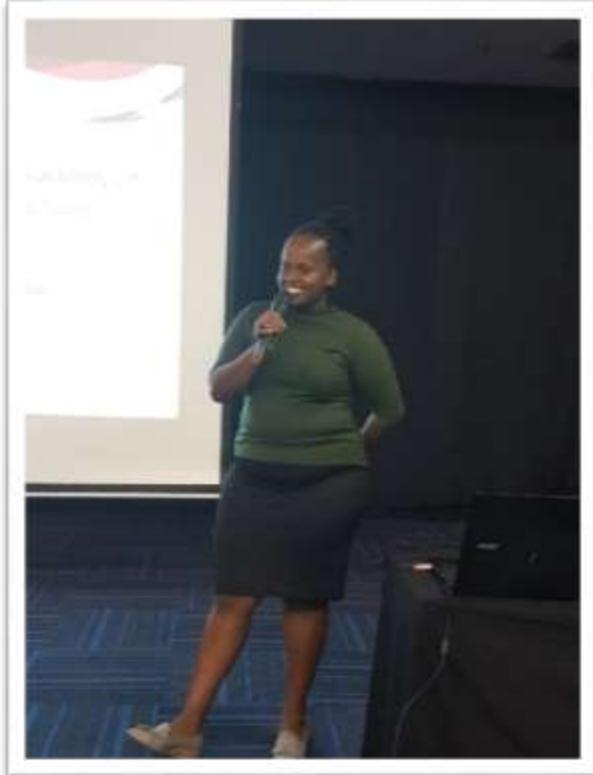
2. University of Fort Hare

A two-day retreat organised by University of Fort Hare's, Department of Livestock and Pasture Science for its postgraduate students aimed to primarily address the maximization of research output. Dr Nosiphiwe Ngqwala, a SAYAS ExCo member attended the retreat held on 21 April 2017 at the Fish River Sun in Port Alfred and made a presentation on various engagements within the academy stressing the need for young professionals themselves to be bold enough to mentor one another (peer to peer mentorship) and seek innovative ways of implementing their ideas. To achieve this, Dr Ngqwala noted that there is a need for an initiative that brings young talented professionals together to meet regularly with a view to improving their leadership, technical, entrepreneurial and research skill sets through various activities including workshops, training, speed dating, etc.

The knowledge gap between experienced academics and emerging academics (post graduate) seems to be widening. An outcome of this lack of continuity has been a young work force that is inadequately prepared to deal with the post graduate studies challenges in our country.

This also impels postgraduates with innovative and creative ideas but with no information on the appropriate channels to implement their ideas due to lack of well-coordinated and organised mentorship programmes during or upon the completion of their post graduate degrees. In addition, young professionals particularly those still within the university systems find it difficult to actively and meaningfully participate in the academic space.

The retreat was tailored in a way that it empowered the postgraduates with team building, leadership, technical, entrepreneurial and high level research skills are needed by young talented professionals to improve their visibility and participate actively in the academic sector.



3. Rhodes University

SAYAS Gives back on Mandela Day



Nelson Mandela International Day (or Mandela Day) is an annual international day in honour of Tata Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on 18 July, Mandela's birthday.

Dr Nosiphiwe Ngqwala, SAYAS ExCo Member participated by way of holding a workshop on how to apply for post-graduate funding at Rhodes University. The Rhodes University Mandela Day initiative asked scientists at the university to give of their skills at various activities.



4. At the North West University's Potchefstroom Campus

Under the OWSD-SANC/ British Council Newton Fund (UK) banner, SAYAS attended a Presentation by one of the students (who is a beneficiary of the Newton Fund Professional Development and Engagement project) at the North West University's Potchefstroom Campus on June 24, 2016 with Constance Manyeli, the then OWSD-SANC Secretariat at ASSAf.

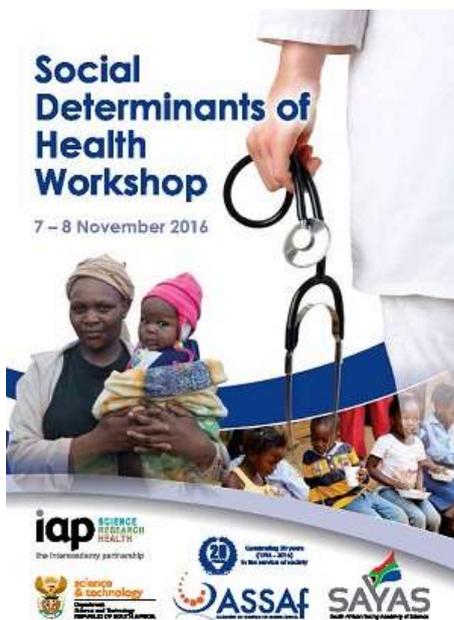
Edith Shikumo from the SAYAS Secretariat made a presentation on SAYAS and opportunities available for young scientists with a focus on the upcoming Annual Young Scientist Conference and the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting. Ms. Shikumo also, paid a Courtesy Call to the university's Research Support Office and met with Me Mpe Meintjes, Cluster Coordinator: General Research Support and Me Buyi Ntaka, Cluster Coordinator: Funding. Ms. Shikumo gave a brief explanation of ASSAf and SAYAS and the benefits for the university's post-doctorate students and early researchers.



Science Policy Proceedings Report: Social Determinants of Health

SAYAS in collaboration with the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), the Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS) and the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS) hosted a 2-day workshop on Social Determinants of Health (SDH) from 6 to 8 November, 2016 at the Garden Court OR Tambo Hotel in Johannesburg. This workshop on SDH sought to deliberate on various policy engagements on Social Determinants of Health (SDH) in Africa and interrogate shortfalls thereof. This was with a view to producing a Conference Statement that would assist policy makers to formulate or implement policies that address social determinants of health in Africa in a holistic manner. Funding for this workshop was made possible by the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines social determinants of health (SDH) “as the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems; development agendas; social norms and policies; and political systems.



Poverty is a major factor that determines the social and environmental conditions which people go about their daily life. It negatively affects health as the poor are denied basic needs such as food, shelter, clean water, sanitation, proper clothing and have limited access to medical care, education and finance.

Representatives from Young Academies of Science (YAs) in Africa that were represented included: South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

A Conference Statement and Proceedings Report were produced. Access link at: <http://www.sayas.org.za/publications/#pub-pub>

SAYAS at the Science Forum 2016

Science Forum South Africa (SFSA) 2016 is a two-day international gathering organised by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) aimed at creating a platform for dialogue on the role of science, technology and innovation in society. The conference, which took place on 8 and 9 December 2016, brought together scientists, government leaders, sector industry representatives, students and civil society to interact on a diverse range of topics under the theme "Igniting conversations about science".

The SFSA 2016 which focused specifically on the social sciences, humanities and the role of science in Africa's development agenda was held at the CSIR Convention Centre.

In addition to the Conference, Science on the Street is a SFSA outreach programme that gives role players in the national system of innovation the opportunity to reach out to ordinary citizens in order to showcase the role that science plays in people's day-to-day lives. The outreach programme further presents ordinary citizens with an opportunity to interact with scientists in order to understand the scientific phenomena in their environment. This interaction contributes to people's understanding of scientific issues and the role of science in sustainable livelihoods.

Prof Puleng Segalo, a SAYAS Member and the Head of Research and Graduate Studies, College of Human Sciences, at the University of South Africa engaged Daveyton women from the Etwatwa Township on 8 December in

conversations on trauma and gender. The dialogue entailed a mapping exercise to show how trauma can be passed on through generations, as well as showing how embroidery could be used as a form of speaking the unspeakable.

Other SAYAS members who participated at the SFSA as panellists in various discussions included:

- Prof Tolu Oni was a Panel Member during the Opening Session as well as presented on various themes including: 'Defining the Principles and Guidelines of Science Advice', 'Science Media in Africa: Exploring Case Studies for Contextual Capacity Building' and 'Making International Engagements Work in Africa'.
- Dr Aldo Stroebel who presented on various themes including: 'An Action Agenda for STI: Driving an Agriculture-led Economic and Social Transformation of Africa' and 'Experiences and Challenges in Setting up Trilateral Cooperation'.
- Prof Puleng Segalo was one of the Judges during the FameLabs competition.

SAYAS also participated in the SFSA by way of exhibiting at a Stand in order to reach more young scientists and create awareness of opportunities available for them.

Edith Shikumo from the Secretariat was interviewed by the Pretoria News during the forum and the article published in the Pretoria News, 9 December edition.

Booklet: Young African scientists living their lives while climbing the academic ladder

Young scientists are the future leaders of science, technology and innovation. As the African continent increasingly works towards building knowledge economies, innovativeness in how talents of young scientists can be nurtured becomes a critical consideration.

This booklet contributes to a further understanding of the nature of careers of young scientists on the African continent and also aims to encourage young scientists in their quest to achieving scientific excellence and doing and living life as well.

Financial support was provided by Gender in Science, Innovation, Technology and Engineering (GenderInSITE). The booklet was produced in partnership with OWSD-SANC.

SAYAS acknowledges the Families in Science Working Group from SAYAS who compiled the booklet and comprised of: Prof Christine Lochner, Stellenbosch University; Prof Genevieve Langdon, University of Cape Town; Dr Caradee Wright, South African Medical Research Council and University of Pretoria; Prof Alta Schutte, North-West University; Prof Lyndy McGaw, University of Pretoria; Prof Marlien Pieters, North-West University; Prof Marietjie Venter, University of Pretoria; Prof Marieka Gryzenhout, University of the Free State and Prof Bronwyn Myers, South African Medical Research Council.

Access booklet at: <http://www.sayas.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Success-Stories-Young-Scientists-in-African-Academies-of-Science.pdf>



Standing Committees

ASSAf is mandated to provide evidence-based scientific advice on issues of public interest to government and other stakeholders. Science policy which is concerned with the allocation of resources for the conduct of science towards the goal of best serving the public interest is therefore a key ongoing activity. ASSAf's science advisory activities are guided by its Standing Committees, which provide strategic direction and guidance. In tapping into the knowledge base provided by Young Scientists, ASSAf undertakes to involve SAYAS members in various Standing Committees and similar initiatives. These include:

SAYAS Member/Alumni	Standing Committee	Objectives/Outcome
Dr Amanda Weltman	STEM Committee	Initiate, oversee and promote studies in STEM education.

		Provide advice to government to inform policies on STEM education at all levels
Dr Aldo Stroebel (Alumnus)	Agriculture Education & Training (AET) Consensus Study	The outcome of the consensus study is a high impact report which will provide evidenced-based information and clear recommendations to relevant stakeholders with an interest in an agricultural human capital development and knowledge system that drives (small) holder, farmer-led development initiatives and innovation in order to achieve commercial food production and increased productivity, food security, as well as economic growth and development
Prof Philani Moyo	Committee for the Reduction of Poverty and Inequality	Provide evidence-based commentary on critical issues pertaining to policy formulation related to the reduction of poverty and inequality, and the implementation of these policies
Prof Mpariseni Budeli (Alumnus)	Humanities Committee	To promote or advance the cause of the Humanities both within ASSAf and within relevant policy-making bodies (such as the National Department of Higher Education and Training, the National Planning Commission and the Department of Science and Technology).
Prof Tolu Oni	Steering Committee for the Joint Workshop on Multiple Morbidities	This is a collaborative initiative between ASSAf and the UK Academy of Medical Sciences
Dr Caradee Wright (Alumnus)	Quest Magazine	Editor
Dr Sershen Naidoo	SAJS	Editor
Dr Sahal Yacoob	ASSAf's Consensus Study Panel on Incentives for Collaborative Research	To provide a guiding framework for a multidisciplinary investigation of ways in which collaborative research can be appropriately recognised and rewarded in South Africa
Prof Bronwyn Myers (Alumnus)	Mental Healthcare of the Nation: Consensus Study (MNS) consensus study	The study panel aims to: 1. Provide baseline data on what is currently offered in South African training programmes of the different cadres of workers in the human resource mix for the delivery of integrated MNS disorder care using a task sharing model; 2. Map these data against core competencies identified at the Ugandan IOM meeting on candidate core competencies for MNS disorders; 3. Make recommendations for core competencies required of training programmes to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), as well as other training and regulatory bodies.

Short report on the Steering Committee for the Joint Workshop on Multiple Morbidities

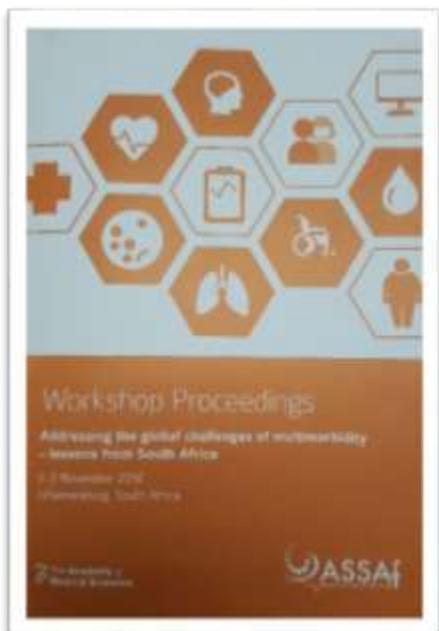
ASSAf and the United Kingdom Academy of Medical Sciences launched two reports (synopsis and proceedings) and an animation on multimorbidity in South Africa. The meeting reports and animation summarise the discussions held during a two-day multimorbidity workshop of key stakeholders from South Africa and the UK on 2 and 3 November 2016. Workshop participants considered the problem of multimorbidities in both countries, and asked how we can achieve a more coherent and consistent approach to defining, researching, and addressing this issue.

Prof Tolu Oni is a member of this steering committee.

Some of the key messages from the workshop included:

- Multimorbidity is a growing global health challenge that affects a large proportion of the world's population. However, as multimorbidity is a complex issue, it has proven difficult to agree on a single definition, as the definition may differ depending on the context e.g. within a research setting or a clinical setting.
- Multimorbidity is growing in prevalence as a result of both an epidemiological shift and a demographic shift.
- Multimorbidity is more common in the elderly so it will be a particular burden in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as South Africa as life expectancy continues to rise.
- Multimorbidity is often associated with socioeconomic status, with those from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds more at risk of developing multiple diseases.
- The current single-disease model is outdated and unhelpful when dealing with the increasing burden of multimorbidity.
- Policymakers worldwide need to better address health inequalities and support the complex service needs of a growing multimorbid population.
- There is a gap between the knowledge of and the ability to address the high mortality from chronic conditions in South Africa, and there are difficulties in the implementation of integrated disease care.
- Mental health is central to the management of multimorbidity and should not continue to be ignored.
- Health systems should be developed so that, in addition to providing adequate treatment and management, they are better able to diagnose multimorbidity, assess its severity and monitor it.
- The patient perspective is vital and any research recommendations must reflect patient priorities.

Access the full report here: <http://research.assaf.org.za/handle/20.500.11911/28>



SAYAS in the News

At its 6th General Assembly held on 12 to 13 October 2016, SAYAS released a Statement on the state of Education in the country following the #Feesmustfall protests. Subsequently, the Statement was developed into an article and published in The Conversation on 10 November. Access: <https://theconversation.com/young-scientists-look-for-solutions-to-south-africa's-higher-education-crisis-67251>

In addition, the Dr Sahal Yacoob, SAYAS Co-Chair was interviewed on PowerFM on 15 November 2016. Access the podcast link on: <https://soundcloud.com/powerfm987/sahal-yacoob-young-scientists-look-for-resolutions-to-south-africa's-higher-education-crisis>

SAYAS Members in the Spotlight

Dr John Ataguba was awarded the 2016 College of Fellows Young Researcher Award for 2016 at the University of Cape Town. The award is granted annually to young academics at UCT to support their demonstrated ability of making a significant contribution to their field, and is intended for research purposes. John is now Associate Professor, Health Economics Division in the School of Public Health & Family Medicine at the University of Cape Town.

Prof De Wet Swanepoel was appointed President of the International Society of Audiology for a two year term. The International Society of Audiology has its official seat in Geneva, Switzerland. Prof Swanepoel is currently a Professor in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology at the University of Pretoria.

Dr Tolu Oni, the immediate former SAYAS Co-Chair is now Associate Professor & Public Health Physician Specialist, Division of Public Health Medicine, School of

Public Health and Family Medicine at the University of Cape Town. Tolu was also elected as Co-Chair of the Global Young Academy (GYA) at their 7th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and International Conference of Young Scientists which took place in Aviemore, Scotland from 15 to 19 May 2017.

Aliza le Roux (PhD) is now Associate Professor: Zoology and Entomology and Coordinator: Afromontane Research Unit at the University of the Free State – Qwaqwa.

Prof Philani Moyo is the new Director of the Fort Hare Institute for Social and Economic Research (FHISER).

Prof Kanshukan Rajaratnam is now Deputy Dean of Transformation and Strategic Projects in the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Cape Town. Part of this is

to lead the Curriculum Change in the context of Commerce at UCT.

Prof Fulufhelo Nelwamondo, received the Order of Mapungubwe (highest honours that a country, through its President, bestows on its citizens) in Silver, in line with the powers vested in the President of the Republic, in terms of Section 84 of the Constitution of South Africa, on 28 April. Nelwamondo is a Founding member of SAYAS and an Alumnus.

Prof Esther Akinlabi is now Vice Dean: Teaching and Learning. She is based at University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment.

Dr Makondelele Makatu is now Associate Professor from Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology at the University of Venda.

New SAYAS Members 2017

Dr Adeyemi Aremu is a Senior Lecturer at DST Centre of Excellence in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, North West University (Mafikeng Campus), where he teaches undergraduate modules in indigenous Science and Technology. He obtained his MSc (Ethnobotany cum lauda, 2010) and PhD (Botany, 2012) degrees from UKZN. He is a National Research Foundation (NRF) Y2 (Young Promising) rated scientist.

Prof Benita Olivier is an Associate Professor in the field of musculoskeletal physiotherapy at the Physiotherapy Department of the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of her PhD research project, she investigated the cricket fast bowling action with the aid of kinematic analysis. She established the Wits Physiotherapy Movement Analysis Laboratory in 2010 and has moulded it into a lab that advocates research excellence. She is a Y-rated NRF researcher.

Prof Chris De Wet completed his studies at University of Johannesburg (then RAU) and the University of Pretoria. He is currently Associate Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Studies in the Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, at UNISA. He is an international expert on ancient Greek and Roman slavery and labour exploitation, and has published two monographs on the topic. He holds an NRF Y1 rating.

Prof Roula Inglesi-Lotz is an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria and is an Y1 NRF rated academic. She completed her undergraduate studies in 2006 at the University of Macedonia, Greece and continued with her postgraduate studies at the University of Pretoria, South Africa in 2008.

Prof Reza Malekian is an Associate Professor and head of Advanced Sensor Networks Research Group in the Department of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering at the University of Pretoria. He holds an NRF Y-rating.

Dr Rory Pilosof is a Senior Lecturer at the UFS, in the Department of Economics. He undertook his PhD at the University of Sheffield on white farming discourse and identity. He holds an NRF Y1 rating.

Prof Yanxia Sun got her DTech in Electrical Engineering, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa and PhD in Computer Science, University Paris-EST, France in 2012. She holds a NRF Y2 rating. Currently she is serving as an Associate Professor and Head of Department: Electrical and Electronic Engineering Science, University of Johannesburg.

Dr Marde Helbig is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Computer Science at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on solving dynamic multi-objective optimisation problems using computational intelligence algorithms. Before joining the university, she worked at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). She holds an NRF Y1 rating.

Dr Lindie Koorts is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Free State's Centre for Africa Studies. She holds an MA (cum laude) in Historical Studies from the University of Johannesburg and a DPhil in History from the University of Stellenbosch. She holds an NRF C1 rating.

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SAYAS Facebook page: **South African Young Academy of Science**

