

ASSA UPDATE

The ASSA Exco would like to wish all Society members compliments of the season.

As of October 2007 ASSA had a paid up membership of 455 (with 46 subscriptions unpaid). New members and those lost to emigration etc. balance each other out. Mrs Sue Parkes is doing an admirable job under difficult circumstances in ensuring that the database is kept current.

It was decided by the presidents of the various surgical societies at a meeting on 25 May 2007 that a combined secretariat would be most efficient. However, the implementation of this decision is proving to be a little elusive. A final decision regarding the site of the combined offices has to be made and a suitable person to run the secretariat has to be identified.

ASSA Discovery Clinical Excellence Awards

ASSA and Discovery have introduced the ASSA Discovery Clinical Excellence Awards. These are awarded annually to the registrar in each academic department who was judged to have excelled in the clinical field. The recipients in 2007 were:

Free State	Tiens van der Merwe
Stellenbosch	Anton Lambrechts
Witwatersrand	Alan Cairns
Walter Sisulu	Bernard Ocharo
UCT	Mark Hewat
Medunsa	Dikeledi H. Mokone
UKZN	Shubash Chirkut
Pretoria	Pradeep Mistry.

Discovery sponsored R2 500 and ASSA sponsored R1 000, enabling an award of R3 500 to each registrar to help them attend a local academic meeting.

ASSA Distinguished Service Award

The recipients of the ASSA Distinguished Service Award are Mr C. N. Pillay (2007) and Mr R. Wise (2009).

Mr Pillay's nomination reads: 'Mr Coomasamy Nithianathan Pillay's

contribution to the development of public sector surgical services in Durban and his longstanding and diverse commitment to the wider community, positions him as a worthy recipient of recognition by the Association of Surgeons of South Africa.

Having qualified at the University of Witwatersrand in 1954, Mr Pillay was the first person of colour, in 1967, to obtain the Fellowship in Surgery (Edinburgh)... Following his service as Surgeon and Lecturer at the University of Natal, Mr Pillay took appointment, in 1969, at the recently established RK Khan Hospital where he started the Department of Surgery single-handedly. This Department developed under Mr Pillay's leadership as arguably the most respected and effective Department of Surgery in the Durban metropolitan region...

During his tenure at the RK Khan Hospital, Mr Pillay saw the need for a Hospice for the care of the terminally ill... Thus began, from 1992, a series of endeavours, spearheaded by Mr Pillay, which culminated in the development of the Chatsworth Regional Hospice that was officially opened in February 1995. This noble facility has grown from strength to strength and is today widely acknowledged for its service to the community...

Mr Pillay has been an exemplary teacher of Surgery and purveyor of surgical service to the impoverished in our community. He continues, in his retirement, to serve the community; he is richly deserving of recognition by ASSA.'

ASSA Young Surgeons Sponsorship

ASSA has established a Young Surgeons Sponsorship to enable registrars to visit other academic centres to gain skills in areas not covered at their own institutions. Unfortunately in 2007 there were no nominations for this award. This was discussed at Exco and it was felt that this was mainly for logistical reasons.

It was suggested that registrars make a collateral swap. Academic

heads of departments are to come up with possible candidates.

Cooperation between ASSA and other African societies and colleges

The visit to Dakar by Sats Pillay and Paul Goldberg established good relationships. Professor Victor Ngu, who was the driving force in establishing the West African College of Surgeons (WACS), has been nominated for Honorary Fellowship of the College of Medicine of SA. There is a desire for cooperation. Professor Del Kahn will be talking at the inaugural meeting of the Ghanaian College.

FUTURE CONFERENCES/ EVENTS

ASSA does not organise a congress this year. Professor Paul Goldberg and his organising committee are busy with preparations for the ASSA 2009 Congress to be held in Cape Town from 7 to 10 August 2009.

UCT surgery department will be having an Update in Surgery from 15 to 16 March 2008 in Cape Town.

The Wits 21st Biennial conference will be held from 14 to 16 June 2008 at Sandton Convention Centre. There will be satellite workshops and symposia.

SASES and SAGES will be holding a joint conference in Cape Town from 8 to 12 August 2008.

The University of Pretoria will be holding a Controversies in Surgery meeting from 3 to 4 October 2008.

Professor Martin Smith (chairperson of the Steering Committee) reported that the Hepato-Pancreatico-Biliary Association of SA (HPBASA) has won the bid to host the next biennial conference of the International Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association (IHPBA) in South Africa in 2011. He sent a letter of invitation to ASSA to partner with the HPBASA in 2011, to which the ASSA Exco has agreed in principle. A similar invitation is to be extended to SAGES.