

ASSA NEWS

New Health Act

Regarding the development around the proposed new Health Act, ASSA is concerned about the impact on members. SAMA is using its resources to counter the implementation of aspects of this act, but if necessary ASSA will make independent submissions, although this would incur significant costs.

Surgeons practice cost study

The information gathered in the surgeons practice cost study has proved invaluable and has enabled discussions with other parties, including the Department of Health. SAMA is currently using the same company to perform a study using a very similar methodology for a much wider range of health professionals.

Operation Hernia, Ghana – Outreach into Africa

Professor Sandie Thomson recently took a small team, including representatives from both ASSA and PAAS, to Ghana, who performed approximately 100 hernia operations in rural areas. The Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland (ASGBI) has requested different teams to visit different countries, and we are hoping to bring such outreach closer to home in the future.

Membership

ASSA currently has 358 paid-up members. Surgeons who are not members should be encouraged to join the ASSA. This is a critical time for the future of surgery, and our strength lies in unity.

Combined secretariat

New premises have been rented within the SAMA Gauteng Branch Head

Office at the Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre. These premises are being refurbished, and will become the permanent home of the ASSA secretariat, and the combined secretariat for all surgical societies.

Distinguished Service Award

ASSA members are asked to remember to nominate worthy colleagues for the ASSA Distinguished Service Award. Nominations should be forwarded to the secretariat at assa@worldonline.co.za

ASSA Clinical Excellence/ Young Surgeons Award

An announcement will be made soon for nominations for the ASSA Clinical Excellence Awards for young surgeons (who must be a member).

ASSA-SAGES Conference 2007

Congratulations to Professor Hennie Becker and his team for the excellent organisation of the successful ASSA-SAGES combined conference 2007, which was held in Sun City in August. The remarkable profit made during that conference ensures that ASSA's financial position remains stable and that it can continue to support several initiatives.

COSECSA meeting

The College of Surgeons of East, Central & Southern Africa (COSECSA) will be holding its meeting at the Polana Hotel in Maputo on 5 - 6 December 2008. This will be a lovely venue, and all are encouraged to attend, and if possible, present.

Website

ASSA will soon be setting up a page on its website for advertising surgical posts within South Africa. To place

an ad on this site, kindly contact the secretariat.

Source: www.surgeon.co.za

Surgical checklist launched

A checklist identifying a set of surgical safety standards for surgical teams to use in operating theatres was launched recently by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Developed by the Safe Surgery Saves Lives initiative under the leadership of Dr Atul Gawande, a surgeon and professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, the checklist is part of a major drive to make surgery safer worldwide.

Major surgery is occurring at a rate of 234 million procedures per year – one for every 25 people – and studies indicate that a significant percentage of these result in preventable complications and deaths. In developing countries, for example, death rates during major operations are believed to be between 5% and 10%, and in parts of sub-Saharan Africa mortality from general anaesthesia alone is reported to be as high as 1 in 150.

The checklist identifies three phases of an operation: before the induction of anaesthesia ('sign in'), before the incision of the skin ('time out') and before the patient leaves the operating room ('sign out'). In each phase, a checklist co-ordinator must confirm that the surgery team has completed the listed tasks before it proceeds with the operation.

The checklist is being piloted at 8 sites around the world. The pilot site in Africa is the St Francis Designated District Hospital in Ifakara, Tanzania – a public hospital with the capacity to handle 370 permanent patients as well as 600 adults and 300 children daily.

Source: www.who.int