

The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University hosted a successful 50th International Association of Dental Research Conference

By Phaladi Seakgwe



The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University hosted the 50th International Association of Dental Research Conference (IADR) from 12 -13 November 2020 at the Fire and Ice Protea Hotel, near Menlyn, in Pretoria.

IADR is a professional body of oral health practitioners with over 10 000 members worldwide. The IADR' mission is to drive dental, oral, and craniofacial research to advance health and well-being worldwide. Its vision is to provide access to oral health services for the world through discovery and dissemination.

A number of prominent speakers attended and addressed the conference including Deputy Minister of Higher Education Science and Innovation Mr Buti Manamela, Vice Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg Prof Tshilidzi Marwala, Professor Ayo-Yusuf and others.

Speaking at the conference, Deputy Minister Manamela congratulated SMU for successfully hosting such an event during the era of the Covid-19 pandemic and for choosing to speak about the 4th Industrial Revolution and how the higher education sector needs to adapt. "When we asked the

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Universities to go for an early recess, some of the things we had to look at was how we abandon the traditional ways of teaching and learning”, emphasized the Deputy Minister. Manamela noted that the shift to remote learning during the lockdown laid bare the inequalities that existed between institutions and the students from different backgrounds. He further said that government made huge interventions and investments on online learning including blended learning methods.

Professor Tshilidzi Marwala challenged Doctors of the future to be technologists. “We need to look at how best we can deploy artificial intelligence in medicine and those in the medical space should embrace technology. The 4th Industrial Revolution is about the convergence of technology and human resources”, he said.

Deputy Minister of Health Dr Joe Phaahla also delivered an address to the conference emphasizing the need to ensure that the gap is breached between those who have resources and the ones who have not including the rural based communities. “We need to use science and research to find better ways of improving our health and wellbeing. There is a need to promote oral health and prevent oral health diseases”, said Dr Phaahla.

SMU Deputy VC for Research, postgraduate studies and innovation Prof Ayo-Yusuf said there is a need to focus on the 4IR in dealing with oral health issues and spoke about a number of technologies available. He challenged South Africa not to undermine itself in the area of oral health and said the country can be a leader in this field. He invited delegates to come to the SMU school of oral health to come and see the resources and intellectual capacity available to drive the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Earlier on, the Dean for the School of Oral Health Prof Stephen Hendricks emphasized that oral health practitioners are at the risk of contracting Covid-19 as they have to treat patients exactly where the disease resides. “When we treat patients, it puts us in proximity with the virus. We had to look more on the provision of PPEs for the oral health personnel and exercise the protocols in line with the guidelines of promulgated by government”, concluded Prof Hendricks.



The wonders of Laparoscopic Frey Procedure to treat Chronic Pancreatitis Patients

By Maditsi Matlala

Dr Imraan Sardiwalla, of the department of general surgery, hails Laparoscopic Frey Procedure (LFP) as a promising treatment, for patients, suffering from chronic pancreatitis. Why does he believe this minimally invasive surgery technique is good, when the most used surgical technique in South Africa's health care system has been an open surgical technique for treatment of chronic pancreatitis?

“We believe it is worth doing, at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH) we have treated two patients with this technique, and there are merits to use of the LFP. These findings were also confirmed by case reports from around the world and a series of 15 patients from Palanivelu's GEM Hospital group in India. Though there is limited data, we were able to confirm the findings that a patient's post-operative recovery period is quicker, largely because we do not make a big cut under the ribs to be able to reach the pancreas. The small cuts that are made result in the patient experiencing less pain and recovering better. Technically there may be an advantage to laparoscopy as it is easier to suture the pancreatic duct to the jejunum in a water tight fashion, due to improved visualisation of laparoscopy,” Sardiwalla emphasized.

The two patients were discharged from the intensive care unit the following day after the surgery. They spent three days in the general ward in order to monitor their progress. None of them had any post operation complications, there were no pancreatic fistulae. Their post-operative pain scores were reduced and their quality of life also improved. These are desirable outcomes in chronic pancreatitis with the hope that decreased pain will allow these chronically debilitated patients to return to work and lead productive healthy lives.

The lesson from this whole experience for Dr Sardiwalla and the team is that the application of the laparoscopic technique comes with its own set of challenges, it is crucial to have training in both Hepatobiliary surgery as well as advanced laparoscopy to obtain successful outcomes, otherwise patients may suffer morbidity.

“We perform lots of minimally invasive procedures. We have familiarity with technical difficulties of advanced laparoscopy for hepatobiliary disease including laparoscopic Whipple procedures, laparoscopic liver resections, we have now entered the realm of chronic pancreatitis with the LFP.

We are advantaged at SMU/Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital Complex because of the stewardship of Prof Zach Koto. He is a shining light for minimal access surgery in South Africa. His efforts and insistence on pursuing a minimally invasive route have resulted in us gaining expertise and an accumulated wealth of experience that enables us to deal with such challenges with a great deal of confidence”, he added.

Professor Balabyepeki and Dr Sardiwalla of the HPB team at Dr George Mukhari/ SMU have strong hopes to push the frontiers of laparoscopic hepatobiliary surgery. This approach in the South African context is still developing but it is an inevitable reality. Minimal access surgery is the future of surgery and we must endeavour to offer our patients all of its advantages. Performing these surgeries is also a massive team effort. The anaesthesiology and critical care departments are crucial to the success of the procedures. Opting for such a procedure has some benefits for patients in that they will stay for shorter periods in hospital. It also means that less ICU resources will be utilised going forward.



Prof Honey Mabuza elected President of the College of Family Physicians of SA

By Maditsi Matlala

Prof Honey Mabuza, the newly elected President of the College of Family Physicians, pledges to steer the noble profession with integrity and transparency to enable it to reach a higher level. This is the legacy that he wishes to leave, after his three-year term of office, ends in 2023.

Elected through a secret ballot process, by family physicians, Prof Mabuza brings health care expertise and a wealth of experience in health care to the profession. He completed Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor Surgery (MBChB) and a Master's degree in Family Medicine (M Fam Med), at SMU.

He has a wealth of experience as a clinician, working at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital and (DGMAH) and a senior lecturer at SMU. Not satisfied with healing the bodily ills and aches, Mabuza also administers to the spiritual needs as a pastor during the weekends. He is a holder of Bachelor of Theology degree (BTh) obtained from UNISA.

“I will put what I am gifted with, on the table, and therefore, uniquely, contribute in the wellness and moving the college from strength to strength” he pledges. Prof Mabuza will preside over a twelve-member council which was elected by family physicians. The twelve then elect a three-member executive, namely, the president, the

secretary and the senator. His peers found him worthy of their votes, for which he is eternally grateful.

Among others, his duties involve representing the interests of family physicians at the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA), which is an umbrella body of all speciality colleges, in SA. He will also convene meetings of the college council at least once a year, acts as an adviser to the President CMSA, Senate and CMSA Officers, provide an annual college report for publication in the CMSA platforms and revise the panel of examiners of the college examinations triennially, for the guidance of the Examinations and Credentials Committee.

Family medicine, which is considered a cornerstone of primary health care, is a medical speciality that is dedicated to the provision of comprehensive health care to all people, of all ages.

He takes the torch of leadership at a very challenging time when the whole world is grappling with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. He is mindful of this and other challenges in the health care industry. He is however unfazed by these challenges. “My leadership will not be a one man show”, as I have a collective of leaders in their own right whose opinions will be valued and that will go a long way to enable the college to overcome any challenges.



Paediatric Oncology Unit Receives HPCSA Accreditation

By Tumelo Moila

The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) and Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH) were recently accredited by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) with a subspecialty training unit of Paediatric Oncology. The Paediatric oncologists diagnose, treat, and manage children and teens with cancers, blood cells and bleeding disorders. “We are a 30 bedded unit and we get approximately 50 new admissions per year. We treat all types of childhood cancers (blood and solid cancers for patients up to the age of 18 years), and all the benign haematology disorders,” said Dr Elelwani Madzhia, head of Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Unit at SMU/DGMAH.

Dr Elelwani Madzhia

The unit is located at DGMAH (ward 20) and caters for patients residing in City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality's northern areas (Ga-Rankuwa, Soshanguve, Mabopane, and Hammanskraal), and North-West province. “We offer medical, surgical and psychosocial therapy to our patients with the help of a multidisciplinary team that comprises of various health practitioners. We also get the

support from the cancer support non-governmental organisations like Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa (CHOC), Reach for a Dream Foundation, Rainbows & Smiles Rainbow (Supporting kidz with cancer), and the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSAs),” said Dr Madzhia.

Under the leadership of Dr. Madzhia, the unit hopes to improve the overall outcome of the patients. The unit wish to offer a radiotherapy service and also conduct a lot of research in the near future. The challenges encountered at the unit are more psycho-social and requires preventive measures for patients wellbeing. “There is a lack of awareness in the communities, which results in us receiving patients coming with advanced stages of cancer. With cancer, early presentation is essential in order to achieve an overall high survival rate and a good quality of life,” highlight Madzhia.

“Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have not had any positive patients in our unit,” conclude Madzhia, who is an SMU Alumna.

Mr & Miss SMU Fresher's Scoop Titles at the SA Campus Pageant

By Tumelo Moila

SMU students Nzuzo Mpondwana (Mr SMU Freshers 2019) and Thendo Tshingowe (Miss SMU Freshers 2019) were recently crowned Mr SA Campus Charity 2020 and Miss SA Campus Speech 2020 respectively during the annual Mr and Miss SA Campus pageant. The aim of the pageant is to select the best possible candidates from a group of young and intelligent representatives from the South African Universities, to represent the country at the World Miss University.

"I was so honoured and overwhelmed to hear my name being called on charity category for Mr SA Campus Charity 2020. This means a lot to me, meaning I have a huge responsibility that I have to play as the young leader to bring change in the society and take up space in every opportunity that comes and encourage young talented

individuals through my actions so they can see that in life everything is possible, it's just that everything needs time, dedication, ambition and hope, therefore I aspire to inspire young people through my actions and my voice," said Nzuzo, a Bachelor of Science (in Biology) student.

"I was ecstatic when my name was called out as the winner of the speech category, this was a win I was not expecting. Receiving this recognition made me realize that I can speak for good causes and I would like to continue to use my voice to show that anything is possible for those who are willing to put in the hard work and efforts necessary to achieving their dreams. I cannot wait to reach new heights and enter new spaces with my new title and share the message with many others that a dream remains a dream until it is backed up with action" says Thendo, Bachelor of Pharmacy student.





Meet Dr Gail Maseko recently appointed Paediatrician

By Floyd Mmakou

Dr Gail Maseko is a qualified paediatrician who recently joined SMU/DGMAH. She possesses vast experience in her field, and served in multiple hospitals in the country, among them are Steve Biko and Addington hospitals. She chose to work for SMU because she spotted an opportunity for growth by being part of the institution.

Her role as a general paediatrician is to look after sick children focusing on general paediatrics. She is also involved in both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. "Children are darlings, because children do not lie to you, what you see is what you get. That is what motivated me to develop passion in working and treating sick children," she said. She loves working with children and would like to contribute positively towards the health of children and improve the wellbeing of children in South Africa.

Dr Maseko's short-term goal is to sub-specialize in neonatology or pulmonology in the near future. She hopes to study and train in the sub-specialty at SMU, with a believe that it can be done here and that the institution is capable of assisting her reach her goals.



SMU students march against Gender-Based Violence

By Phaladi Seakgwe

Scores of students from SMU marched to the Pretoria West Police Station recently to hand over a memorandum to the station commander. This followed the brutal rape of one of the students who was abducted by two men as she went to the convenience store near her residence. Students challenged the management of the police station to deal with crime in the area. They further implored the SMU management to also improve security measures in order for students to feel safe while studying. The university management led by Prof Peter Mbatji joined the students during the march and called for cooperation between the university and the police to ensure the safety of students. The march was used to highlight issues of Gender Based Violence.

