

CCSSA: From the President

The past year has been a challenging one as we have struggled to deal with the pressures of providing critical care within southern Africa. There are major problems in both the organisation of critical care and the availability of trained and skilled personnel. However, as we approach the annual congress, there are a number of developments that we can celebrate.

Within South Africa, the ongoing success of regional and national critical care meetings has been encouraging. There is a need for meetings where people have the opportunity to develop their expertise in critical care. We have been wonderfully supported by the industry and can be proud of the quality of the meetings that are held throughout the country. The meeting at Sun City promises to be interesting and exciting, and I hope that delegates are able to find excitement, fresh energy and new friends during this time.

Below Juan Scribante has provided more information about the development of the Clinical Trials Group which has been established to facilitate research in critical care in southern Africa. I believe that its establishment will provide a landmark in the development of critical care research in southern Africa, and will enable us to build on the research that has been done to date.

Members of the society continue to make significant contributions to critical care internationally, with Sats Bhagwanjee as secretary general of the World Federation of Intensive and Critical Care Medicine, Shelley Schmollgruber as secretary of the World Federation of Critical Care Nurses, Minette Coetzee as a Board member of the World Federation of Pediatric Intensive and Critical Care Societies, and Andrew Argent as the president of the World Federation of Pediatric Intensive and Critical Care Societies.

It is a great honour for us to welcome the board and delegates from the World Federation of Critical Care Nurses to the 2007 Congress. This is a unique opportunity for the southern African critical care community to meet with leading nurses from across Africa and the world. I hope that the meetings and discussions will bear fruit in terms of ongoing collaborations and friendships. Shelley Schmollgruber and her team have done a wonderful job in organising this.

For me it has been a wonderful privilege to be president of the Society for the last few years, and I thank the Society and the hardworking members of Council for their support and friendship.

Andrew Argent

Council update

The Council is engaged with several projects at the moment. Research in critical care should have a big boost soon with the formation of the Clinical

Trials Group (see below). The results of the National Audit and PISA studies should be published shortly. Discussions with the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa are ongoing and a formal intercollegiate examining body should be established soon to coordinate the Certificate in Critical Care Exam which is offered by several colleges. The new constitution for the Society is being developed (latest version on the website). It has been proposed that the annual congress should rotate between the major centres (i.e. Gauteng, Cape Town and Durban) and that the refresher course should be offered to smaller centres to host – hence the decision to have this year's refresher course in Port Elizabeth. A travelling fellowship is available to bring national speakers to smaller branches. Contact the secretary if you would like someone to visit your branch and give a talk.

Source: www.criticalcare.co.za

South African Critical Care Clinical Trials Group established

A Clinical Trials Group (CTG) was formed within the CCSSA in September 2006. The mission of the CTG is to promote research that improves the outcome from critical care and to promote research in the critical care community.

The following CTG executive committee was established in February 2007:

Chair: Professor Sats Bhagwanjee

Vice chair: Professor Andrew Argent

Secretary: Ms Juan Scribante

Treasurer: Dr Fathima Paruk

Members: Dr Dean Gopalan, Ms Shelley Schmollgruber

The CTG will initiate projects (CTG-initiated projects) to address key questions that will affect patient care. The executive committee is currently in the process of identifying the group's first project, and input from interested parties is welcome. The CTG will also endorse projects (CTG-endorsed projects) that are initiated from outside the CTG by interested parties. Both project groups will be subject to a review process and must comply with good clinical research practice.

Some of the functions of the CTG will be to:

- offer a research training programme at the national congress
- compile a database of relevant postgraduate research (medical and nursing)
- ensure that all completed CTG-initiated projects are presented at the national congress.

The CTG terms of reference are available on the CCSSA website. Members of the Society who are interested in participating in CTG projects are invited to join the group.

Juan Scribante (juan.scribante@wits.ac.za)