No running water...

What would you do if you went to work one day and there was no running water? Would you go home or stay and work? This is not a hypothetical question. Recently, we read of the severe shortage of water in North West and Mpumalanga. In fact, it was so bad that students at the Potchefstroom campus of North-West University were sent home. An ER24 blog described the situation well: “No water means that you can’t cook, you can’t drink, you can’t wash, you can’t clean and you can’t flush the loo”. What does that mean for a community pharmacy, primary healthcare clinic or a hospital pharmacy? How can medicine continue to be dispensed in a facility that has no water? Surely this would pose a health hazard? I know that waterless hand sanitisers can help considerably, but I doubt that they are available in all facilities. And it seriously doesn’t help if you can’t flush the toilet. I also doubt that I’d survive a day at work without coffee!

Pharmacy Council issues

I know that you read Pharmaciae. (I even know that you turn to the pages on disciplinary issues first to see if your name is there, or that of your best friend, or that dreadful guy who cheated when you played poker at varsity.) You also read the PSSA’s e-newsletter. So if you’ve already read about the events that I want to talk about, I do apologise. I just don’t want you to miss out.

2013 SAPC National Pioneer Pharmacy Awards

You might have noticed that a Pharmacist of the Year award was not made at the end of last year. I was sad about that because both Pharmacy Council and its sponsors were eagerly looking forward to it. The reason that this didn’t happen was because the National Health Recognition Awards, hosted by the National Department of Health, were not made in 2012. Therefore, the SAPC decided to expand the awards and to bestow the award at the 2013 SAPC Conference instead. It’s exciting. There are nine categories for pharmacy professionals and five for pharmacy facilities. The awards will be handed out at the Pharmacy Council conference at Sun City in June.

I hope you remembered to nominate someone!

SAPC conference

Are you better than I at choosing which sessions to attend at a conference? I hate it when I have to make a careful selection because I often want to go to all of the sessions. It’s relatively easy for me to choose at the Academy conference. If I can’t pronounce it or have no idea what it means, then it probably wouldn’t be wise to go to it.

There’s a lot to choose from at the Council conference this year. How am I going to make a choice between pharmacy ethics and strategies to increase the capacity of pharmacy human resources; antimicrobial stewardship versus attracting young people into the profession; or National Health Insurance versus the management of noncommunicable diseases? Oh well. Life’s all about choices, I guess.

Pharmacy Council elections

And here is something where choice is vital. The countdown has begun. This year is election year. Are you going to nominate someone or stand for election yourself? If you haven’t thought about it yet, please do so. It’s vitally important that the representatives are chosen wisely. This is an opportunity to ensure that expertise and experience from all sectors of pharmacy are available on Council.

It’s an honour to represent the profession on Council, but it comes with great responsibility. It’s exciting and interesting, but also frustrating at times, as well as a wonderful opportunity to serve the public and the profession, and also to grow.

Mind games

You know that I love words. You might know that I subscribe to dictionary.com’s Word of the Day. You also know that I read the SAPJ. And you probably know that I enjoy computers and computer games. (As long as I can beat my grandchildren, that is.) What you don’t know (yet) is that I play games when I read the SAPJ. I try to make a point of identifying at least two words a month that I have either never seen before, or at the very least have no idea of their meaning. There are numerous words in the SAPJ and I know quite a few of them, so that makes it rather challenging.

This month, the two words that I needed to read up on are “intussusceptions” and “dacryocystitis”: I’m not going to spoil the game for you by telling you what they mean, or even which articles to read. Have fun!

Lorraine Osman