The All African Congress on Pharmacology and Pharmacy was an immense collaborative effort between the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences of South Africa (APSSA), the South African Society for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (SASBCP), also acting on behalf of Pharmacology for Africa (Pharfa), and the Toxicology Society of South Africa (ToxSA). This conference marked the 37th annual APSSA conference and was hosted by the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology. The congress was held from 5-8 October 2016 at the beautiful Misty Hills Conference Centre, situated close to the Cradle of Humankind.

This one of a kind congress was very well attended by more than 250 national and international delegates representing South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Brazil, Germany, Mauritius, Switzerland, the UK and USA and featured 90 oral presentations in three parallel sessions (including 21 APSSA Young Scientist entries) together with 78 posters. The majority of universities offering pharmacy programmes were represented at the conference. We were fortunate to have a treasure chest of eminent scientists as plenary/invited speakers including Prof Matthias Hamburger, Prof Veronika Butterweck, Prof Janusz Paweska, Prof Mohamed Khayyal, Dr Lucky Sikwivhilu and Prof Angela Woodiwiss who honoured us with their presence and excellent presentations. The Clinical Pharmacology fraternity and Pharfa were also well represented through Prof Karen Barnes, Prof Mark Cotton, Prof Helmuth Reuter, Prof Alexander Dodoo and Prof Eyasu Makkonnen Eshetu.

The congress kicked off in grand fashion on Wednesday morning with the very well attended Antimicrobial stewardship workshop presented by Prof Shirley-Anne Boschmans and Dr Renier Coetzee. The non-resistant attendees welcomed this initiative and activities will continue under the leadership of Prof Superdrug Boschmans. Mechanisms of (future) action will be announced in due course.

On Wednesday afternoon the conference was formally opened by Prof Gill Enslin (TUT), Prof Wim du Plooy (SMU) as well as the society presidents: Prof Sandra van Dyk (APSSA), Prof Tiaan Brink (SASBCP) and Prof Douglas Oliver (Pharfa) followed by two excellent plenary presentations and the APSSA poster session. The start of the social functions was heard and felt through the drumming vibrations enjoyed by all. The young scientists continued socialising at the aptly named Ginbox but were all wide-awake the next day as the competition got underway.
The more carnivorous omnivores among delegates enjoyed a meat feast at Carnivores restaurant on Thursday evening and before we knew it the time for the Gala dinner had arrived. The party mood was set from the get-go by the vibrant décor, excellent music and a most engaging Master of Ceremonies, Prof David Katerere. This main event not only signifies the end of a successful conference, but this is also where research and teaching excellence was acknowledged through several prestigious awards. A special word of thanks to all of our adjudicators for being willing to perform this most important arduous task.

Boehringer Ingelheim awards

The APSSA would like to thank Boehringer Ingelheim for its continued support of Academy through the Young Scientist and Best Publication awards sponsorship. The awards were presented to the winners by Ilse Cukrowski.

Young Scientist Awards

The Young Scientist awards remain a highlight of the conference and this year was no exception. Our young APSSA members delivered presentations of excellent quality under the inquisitive eyes of our judges. The Young Scientist award – Laboratory-based – was awarded to Werner Gerber of North-West University with his presentation entitled “Effect of selected disintegrants on drug membrane permeation” (co-authors: JH Hamman, JD Steyn). The runner-up award in this category was presented to Heather Moyo from the University of the Western Cape for her presentation on the “Synthesis of- and structure-activity relationship study of novel anti-tuberculosis derivatives to combat resistance by Mycobacterium tuberculosis” (co-authors: E Kapp, SF Malan, S Sampson). Angeliki Messina, with her presentation entitled “Evaluation of colistin utilization in patients with multidrug and extensive drug resistant gram-negative infections in four private hospitals in South Africa”, received the Young Scientist award in the Pharmacy Practice category (co-authors: A Brink, S van Vuuren).

Best Publication Awards

Best Publication in Pharmacy Practice: Ros Dowse – Rhodes University (co-authors: S Patel); Understanding the medicines information-seeking behavior and information needs of South African long-term patients with limited literacy skills

Best Publication in Pharmaceutics: Lissinda du Plessis – North-West University (co-authors: K Govender, P Denti, L Wiessner); In vivo efficacy and bioavailability of lumefantrine: Evaluating the application of Pheroid technology

Best Publication in Pharmaceutical Chemistry: Ayodeji Egunlusi – University of the Western Cape (co-authors: S Malan, J Joubert); Tricycloundecane derivatives as potential N-Methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptor and voltage-gated calcium channel modulators
Best publication in Pharmacology: Brian Harvey – North-West University (co-authors: M Mokoena, F Viljoen, S Ellis, C Brink); Ozone exposure of Flinders Sensitive Line rats is a rodent translational model of neurobiological oxidative stress with relevance for depression and antidepressant response

Johnson & Johnson Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award

Dr Leonie Goosen from Rhodes University was awarded the prestigious Teacher of the Year award presented by Richard Rossiter.

Other awards

In addition to the abovementioned awards, the Tshwane University of Technology and Separations also sponsored prizes:

Awards sponsored by Tshwane University of Technology

Best oral presentation
Fikile Mhlongo, Tshwane University of Technology (co-authors: D Katerere, A Viljoen)

Runner-up
Byron Mubaiwa, University of the Western Cape (co-authors: EM Antunes, DR Beukes)

Awards sponsored by Separations

Best oral presentation with a chromatography element
Tracey Hurrel, University of Pretoria (co-authors: D Cromarty, L Vallier, C-P Segeritz, KS Lilley)

Best poster with a chromatography element
Madelaine Raaths, North-West University (co-authors: LH du Plessis, CJ Malherbe, JH Hamman)

APSSA honorary life membership

Honorary life membership was bestowed upon Prof Shirley-Anne Boschmans for her tremendous contribution to Academy throughout the years.

The new Chairperson and Executive Committee

The year 2016 marked an election year for the APSSA committee. The newly elected chairperson, Professor Rod Walker (Rhodes University), officially accepted the chain of office at the Gala event. Congratulations to the other committee members including Prof Sandra van Dyk (immediate past chairperson, North-West University), Prof Gareth Kilian (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), Dr Ilze Vermaak (Tshwane University of Technology), Deanne Johnston (University of the Witwatersrand), Dr Kim Ward (University of the Western Cape), Ilse Cukrowski (Boehringer Ingelheim) and Nitsa Manolis (Ex officio, PSSA secretariat).
CUM LAUDE

Sponsors and Exhibitors

We are particularly grateful to our sponsors and exhibitors as conferences would be impossible to host without their financial support. Sponsors: Microsep, The British Pharmacological Society, Nestle Nutrition Institute Africa, SA Conventions Bureau, International Council for Science, Tshwane University of Technology, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and Prof Alvaro Viljoen.


We would also like to thank our conference organiser, Carla de Jager (Carlamani Conferences and Events), for an excellent job. We appreciate your friendly and professional hard work and great attention to detail. Thank you as well to the staff at Misty Hills and to each and every person who contributed to our conference in any way through participation, presentation and attendance.

The 2016 conference was a great success and contained the essential ingredients for a good conference: an excellent scientific programme, an abundance of scrumptious food, great entertainment and networking and laughter with colleagues and friends. Proof is obtainable through a number of conference photographs available at: http://carlamani.co.za/all-africa.php

Sandra van Dyk and Rod Walker