Young pharmacists in South Africa are represented throughout the different demographics of the country. As a result, it is not uncommon for ideas and perceptions to differ. Our response to questions and challenges in our profession spread across the entire spectrum of possibilities. To voice an opinion that captures the sentiment of a group is therefore challenging, however I can confidently state that the following is the opposite.

At the beginning of the year, when we were counting down the seconds to 2020 and going over our personal goals of the new year, I doubt anyone made provision for something that would question and test almost every sector, and industry across the globe, which would eventually reshape cultures and behaviours across all mediums. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us into changing our approach to solving problems, finding different tools to perform operations, and shift priorities too. It has also forced many pharmacists into leaving their safe home, to occupy a risky space at work, and returning with risk back home. Some silently question whether the Pharmacists Oath is motivation enough, and whether our pure intention is enough to substitute the lack of much needed validation from the public, corporate and government. The validation would assist and support our roles as essential workers.

“Give them their flowers” is a new urban phrase that is used when validation is owed. Some South African businesses have been giving doctors, nurses, policeman, and the military their flowers through products, discounts and special rates, to mention a few. Their role? Being essential workers. Even though as pharmacists we share the essential worker designation, we may not necessarily find ourselves with a share in the flowers.

Dr Linda Sapadin, psychologist and success coach, once wrote on *The importance of validation*. In her article, she mentions that on the final episode of Oprah’s TV show she highlighted the importance of validation and quoted, "I’ve talked to nearly 30 000 people on this show," she said, “and all 30 000 had one thing in common. They all wanted validation.”

There is no doubt that the work and services provided by pharmacists in all sectors largely impact all households, more so during these COVID-19 times. We get the validation, even if they don’t say it, from the patients we interact with. We see it in the potential of the research we commit to, and the products we produce and distribute. One can however never have enough validation from work done or achieved, so to ensure that we try, it’s recommended that we don’t forget to frequently give each other the flowers we deserve.
Here are a few sites to help stay current with the latest guidelines from reputable institutes and sites:

   Twitter handle: @WHO

   Twitter handle: @ncid_sa

   Twitter handle: @governmentZA

   Twitter handle: @FIP_org

Podcasts such as those posted by the South African Medical Research Council (samrc.ac.za/media/podcast) amongst others, are also a good way of keeping up with the latest information and interviews with specialists.

Young Pharmacists @ Work:

A few of the Young Pharmacists in attendance at the 2020 SAAHIP conference

YPG Chair Matlapeng Mshengu sharing some light about the YPG
The month of March saw SAHIP host a successful conference themed *Left right, left right*, focusing on a range of themes including the NHI, COVID-19 but also featured numerous Young Pharmacists presenting current innovative research and tools that can be used in the hospital sector to advance the practice. YPG Chair, Matlapeng Shabalala Mshengu, had the opportunity to speak on the role and objectives of the YPG. We have no doubt that SAHIP will continue to give the Young Pharmacists’ Group such platforms and groom future leaders.

**Branch activities**

The month of March built momentum as far as YPG activities were concerned. One of these was an initiative by the Pretoria Branch, which saw Projects Coordinator Byron Chukwu attending an SAPC workshop for interns. He stressed the importance of timely completion of CPDs and invited all interns to the annual intern workshops hosted by YPG PSSA Pretoria.

**We want…WE NEEED YOUR PARTICIPATION**

In order for us to understand what you would like to watch, read or do as social projects and campaigns. Please feel free to drop us an email, Facebook message or even just interact by searching PSSA YPG.

Find out from your PSSA branch how you can get involved – they look forward to welcoming and mentoring you.

*Stay safe!*