

ANNUAL REPORTS 2023

STANDING COMMITTEE AND PROJECT REPORTS

SA HEART® EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Committee members

Dr Blanche Cupido (Chair), Dr Mamaila Lebea (PCSSA), Prof Ashley Chin (CASSA), Dr Charle Viljoen (CASSA), Dr Pieter van der Bijl, Dr George Comitis, Dr Sajidah Khan (Fellows Course Co-convenor), Prof John Lawrenson (PCSSA), Prof Lindy Mitchell (PCSSA), Prof Antoinette Cilliers (PCSSA), Dr Arthur Mutyaba (SASCI), Prof Nqoba Tsabedze (HeFFSA), Prof Ruchika Meel (CISSA), Prof Neil Davies (SASCAR) – co-opted, Sister Carmen November (ISCAP) – co-opted and Dr Marshall Heradien (Fellows Programme) – co-opted.

Committee meetings in year

Three general meetings planned for the year (February, July, November - pending). Subgroup meetings re: HOD (Paediatric Cardiology) I, HOD (Adult Cardiology) I, Congenital cardiothoracic surgeons I. In total, 6 meetings.

Involvement in educational events or media participation

SA Heart® monthly Journal Club

These have largely been ticking over since inception in 2021 with a roster drawn up for a rotational basis between SIGs and Branches. We have recently brainstormed ideas on improving the engagement and attendance by members and will implement these in the new year.

SA Heart® Fellows What'sApp / Support group

This started as an initiative in 2019, and was been driven in 2021 / 2022 by Dr Marshall Heradien. The aim is to have monthly or bi-monthly meetings online aimed at topics the Fellows struggle with in particular. The driving force for this will hopefully be the fellows going forward. Relevant articles and teaching material is posted on this group.

SA Heart® annual Fellows exam preparation course: (see below)

Social media output

We have been working with Marelize Stander in creating posts for our social media accounts on Twitter (X), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. We have this year focused on local content creation. Thank you to the members who have contributed in terms of creating posts and making short videos / snippets. We gladly welcome all contributions.

Endorsement of teaching meetings

The Education Committee is approached to endorse meetings, there are criteria for endorsement

Congress involvement

The Education Committee is involved with the scientific programme of the Congress. Further involvement around the allocation of grants and sponsorships as per the SA Heart® Board-approved criteria

Special achievements, impact or progress made

- SA Heart® research and travel grants
 - Travel Grant: R30 000 for international conferences or R10 000 for local quarterly
 - Research grant: R75 000 annually

These grants are awarded after evaluation by the Education Committee.

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Research grant for 2022 was awarded in November 2022: Dr Charle Viljoen. The application process for this grant is open, but no applicants for 2023 as yet.

Travel grants: We have awarded 3 travel grants thus far in 2023: Dr Thomas Aldersley, Prof Ruchika Meel and Ms Carmelita Abrahams.

SA Heart® Fellows exam preparation course

This was the 3rd annual course. It was held from 9 - 11 June 2023 in Cape Town. Fellows from all academic units attended. Esteemed faculty from around South Africa gave a series of lectures. An echo session the Sunday morning was once again spent doing a mock exam. Candidates preparing to write the exam found this interaction with examiners extremely helpful.

SA Heart® Emerging Leaders

The applications for the SA Heart® Emerging Leaders have closed. The award will be announced at the SA Heart® AGM at the Congress.

Head of Department Fora

These have been created to provide a platform for discussion and collective action around issues pertaining to service delivery, training and engagement with educational bodies. We have 3 separate groups at present: Adult cardiology, paediatric cardiology, and congenital cardiac surgery. A number of national issues are currently under discussion and evaluation.

Challenges experienced

- The dwindling numbers at Journal Club attendance.
- Member involvement in ongoing organisational activities.
- Poor member uptake of advertised opportunities.
- Fellows-driven bimonthly programme.
- Translating the activities into more engaged long-term involvement by members (especially in the younger members of the organisation) – creating a community of “paying it forward”.

Goals for next year

- Increased member engagement in terms of involvement / volunteering to get involved in activities.
- More specific / relatable structure to journal clubs / member activities.
- Improved communication to members about the opportunities available – we have utilised the member mailing system, but regrettably email is clearly not the most effective method of communication.
- Increased opportunities for educational activities of allied professionals.
- More patient-centered education and advocacy initiatives, including a web-based portal on our site for the public.
- Greater synergy between SIGS and the SA Heart® mother body. We are all working toward the common goal of improved cardiovascular care in South Africa.

Blanche Cupido
Chair, Education Committee

SA HEART® ETHICS AND GUIDELINES COMMITTEE

Committee members

Pieter van der Bijl, John Lawrenson, Pumeshen Bisetty, Michael Kagiso Masilo, Charle Viljoen, Jens Hitzeroth, Lloyd Joubert, Dirk Blom and Frederic Michel.

Committee meetings in year

There were 4 in total.

Involvement in educational events or media participation

- Comment on COVID-19 vaccination misinformation published online to reflect position of SA Heart®.
- Submission (Editorial) reflecting the position of SA Heart® on influenza vaccination accepted for publication by the South African Medical Journal.

Special achievements, impact or progress made

- Endorsement of World Heart Federation Guidelines on Rheumatic Heart Disease.
- Initiation of South African comment on the European Society of Cardiology Valvular Heart Disease guideline; expected Journal submission before the end of 2023.
- Approached HeFFSA with request to develop South African heart failure guideline, which was accepted and which will proceed under the auspices of HeFFSA.
- SA Heart® sponsorship guidelines written and ratified by the SA Heart® Board.
- Section on anticoagulation and antiplatelet therapy in cardiovascular disease for the Southern African Society of Thrombosis and Haemostasis guideline written and submitted.

Challenges experienced

- MPS document reviewed: reflects an agreement between MPS and individuals, without specific implication for SA Heart® members.

Goals for next year

- No specific goal(s) identified, other than what is described in the terms of reference.

Dr Pieter van der Bijl

Chairperson, Ethics and Guidelines Committee

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SA HEART® REGISTRY – SHARE COMMITTEE

Committee members

Nqoba Tsabedze (Chairperson), Elizabeth Schaafsma, Jacques Scherman, Hellmuth Weich, Ashley Chin, Martin Mpe, Eric Klug, Andrew Thornton and Jens Hitzeroth.

SHARE strives to improve patient care by collecting local data on various conditions and treatments, and sharing this information with stakeholder communities. Having local data is important as it can inform national healthcare policy development when reviewed in conjunction with SA Heart®-supported international guidelines such as those of our affiliate society, the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

The SHARE TAVI registry collects data from all centres implanting TAVIs in South Africa, and has been pressing for greater access to this technology for appropriately selected patients with aortic stenosis in all provinces and across both the State and private sectors. There are now a total of 3 455 patients' clinical data contained in the TAVI registry. Of these, we have captured clinical history and outcomes of over 2 500 patients who have proceeded to have a TAVI implant, and continue to follow up them up for 8 years. TAVI numbers were increasing gradually over the years since initiated, but dipped considerably over 2020 - 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, however 2022 saw a good increase in the number of patients receiving TAVIs, with over 540 implants recorded in the registry in 2022.

Patients who exit the TAVI programme are also followed up for at least 1 year. This allows us to provide comparative local data on the life expectancy and outcomes for patients who do not have TAVIs, compared to those who have had TAVIs. This was the subject of a presentation by the SHARE Investigators at the ESC Congress 2023. TAVI in South Africa shows high success rates, low complications, and greatly increased life expectancy for all implanted patients, benchmarked on a par with international best care standards. Developing relationships with a wider network of funders to encourage them to support access to implants for their members is a priority for the project in the short term.

SHARE is also directed to publish the outcomes from the data collected in the registries, and the aim in 2021 of producing a manuscript by December was paused as many patients had not attended their follow-up visits. Sr Jackie Staveley has joined the TAVI office team to assist with a strong data QA drive. We have also made use of a database linked to the Department of Home Affairs records to verify dates of death for patients suspected of being deceased in cases of Lost to Follow-up. This together with focused follow-up drives by sites through the course of this year has resulted in much of this data being obtained. The analysis and write-up for the planned manuscripts is going ahead in consultation with the site investigators.

The SHARE-TAVI registry is of significant value to both the sites involved and by the funding organisations, who have entrenched the registry-generated data sheets into their own approval processes, and who have shown significant interest in the local outcomes data that has been presented from the registry. This has enabled greater access to TAVI technology for appropriately selected patients, and it is expected that TAVI numbers will continue to increase at a faster pace annually as it becomes more widely available.

We are grateful to all our registry sponsors, Astra Zeneca, Boston Scientific, Edwards Lifesciences, Medtronic, and Pfizer, which have all supported the registry through various grants over the years, and we thank them for their continued support. We hope that as further industry members expand their product offerings to include TAVI implants, that they too will support the registry.

A new device registry for a Mitral Clip procedure has been proposed, and a dataset for this registry has been worked on extensively and is now approved. Drs Jens Hitzeroth and Hellmuth Weich have played a major role in the development of the dataset, and will take on the roles of Principal Investigators for this registry together with Prof Nqoba Tsabedze.

The proposed CRT-D registry with Prof Eric Klug and Dr Andrew Thornton as the Principal Investigators, has been put on the backburner temporarily, and will be kicked off again in 2024.

The Atrial Flutter / Fibrillation registry, SHARE-SAFFR, led by Dr Martin Mpe and Prof Ashley Chin, has been developed and tested by the Investigators, and ethics approval has been obtained for the initial sites. Further sites have been identified and ethics approval is in progress for these sites too. There are plans to expand the registry to include patient-reported feedback, and to use the registry data together with this feedback to help improve awareness and access to care for this condition in South Africa.

The registry projects continue to build on their solid and successful base, and we will continue to generate the type of local data and information that will influence and improve clinical practice, patient care, and public policy in the future.

The SHARE registry committee remains thankful to individual members of SA Heart®, the SA Heart® Executive, industry partners, funders and hospital groups for their continued interest and support of SHARE, and of course most importantly our very grateful thanks to the Investigators and participants at all our registry sites.

Elizabeth Schaafsma Nqoba Tsabedze
Chairperson, SHARE Committee

SA HEART® MEDIA, FUNDING & DIGITAL (MFD) COMMITTEE

The MFD Committee will be comprised of 3 sub-committees. Members and functions include:

Mandi Fine

Ms Mandi Fine is a media and strategic expert and has been invaluable in developing a new media campaign and approach to the annual Congress, together with Ms Sue McGuinness from our PCO, Event Options. They have worked in conjunction with Ms Marelize Stander who currently manages our social media output. In addition, a logistic stream will be outlined for media interviews when SA Heart® is approached. With regard to regular social media blasts – Twitter (X), Facebook, LinkedIn - our plan is for a roster (just like the monthly Journal club) to be rotated between the SIG's and regional branches for monthly news items for firstly cardiologists and physicians, and a separate newsletter for the wider public. We need broader awareness as to who SA Heart® is, what our vision is and awareness of the cardiovascular problems in our country.

Private Practice Sub-Committee

Dr Pieter Van Der Bijl (CISSA), Mr Selvan Govindsamy (ISCAP), Dr Darshan Reddy (Cardiac Surgery), Dr Andrew Thornton (CASSA) and Dr David Jankelow.

I have approached Dr L. Mitchell for a paediatric cardiac representative and Prof N. Tsabedze for representation from HefSSA. We plan to work in close cooperation with Dr Chevaan Hendrickse, Chair of SASCI PPC. A starting point will be to request each representative to discuss with their SIG around their pressing current issues / problems / unmet needs, i.e. what is impacting them with regard to private practice in their respective areas.

The PPC symposium at SA Heart® 2023 Congress will comprise a strategic panel meeting: "Patient access to medication and devices: SA Heart® brings Practitioners, Industry, Funders and Regulators together". The Conference theme is appropriately, "A Collaboration" and in this regard, we wish to work together positively in the future for innovative cardiovascular management.

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Broader funding

Broader funding will also be to find tangible opportunities / projects to hopefully achieve the mission of SA Heart®: To provide cardiovascular care for all citizens. This will be a long-term journey.

Digital Innovation

Prof Pravin Manga, Dr Pieter van der Bijl, Dr Charle Viljoen, Dr Raeesa Bhorat, Dr Ahmed Tayob, Dr Thomas Aldersley, Dr Max Rath, Dr David Jankelow and Dr Andries Dippenaar.

Our intention is firstly to bring an awareness to the future role for disruptive technologies, focusing particularly on how artificial intelligence (AI) will influence cardiovascular medicine. We are presently concluding the AI programme for SA Heart® Congress 2023. The session is entitled "AI: the heart of the matter". Thus far the following presentations will be included:

- What is AI?
- Bridging the divide from AI development to clinical implementation AI for ischaemic heart disease
- AI for risk prediction
- Regulatory issues for AI in healthcare

We are establishing firm links with the ESC Digital Committee, as well as the ACC and WHF in this regard. An exciting project is to partner with the Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR), which comprises an ecosystem of universities in South Africa. I have had meetings with the CAIR chair, Professor Deshen Moodley, who is excited to link with SA Heart® in this regard. They are exploring how we as cardiovascular professionals can be included in such AI projects. In addition, CAIR would be able to join SA Heart® in our research projects, when techniques such as machine learning are required for analysis of big data. CAIR has asked us to develop a media release to announce this partnership. I am presently busy with this.

I am grateful for the opportunity to lead this important Committee. We look forward to exciting new projects and progress in each of the above areas.

David Jankelow

Chairperson: Media, Funding & Digital