CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIA SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, CASSA

Executive
Dr Andrew Thornton (President), Dr Pro Obel (immediate past President), Ms Judy Daniels (Treasurer), Dr Ronnie Jardine, Dr Anthony Stanley, Dr Brian Vezi, Dr Ashley Chin, Prof Rob Scott Millar, Dr Luigi Zampieri, Mr Martin van den Bergh

CASSA had a very difficult year because of issues with our previous chief operating officer both from an administrative, and more particularly from a financial point of view. We had to complete a detailed three-year financial audit which revealed apparent fraud, and for which legal measures are being undertaken. In addition this also required significant reassessment of our income and expenditure with numerous meetings required for all the above to be sorted out. In addition a number of measures have been undertaken to firm up our financial and administrative organisation, to decrease the likelihood of this recurring. I think that this should be a wake-up call for all of the special interest groups to ensure that measures are in place to decrease their exposure to a similar problem.

While we had significant cash flow problems for a period, industry have been very helpful in this regard, and their ongoing support means that with the necessary plans in place, that CASSA is at least in a safe, if not flush, financial position.

We have had 3 executive committee meetings in the last year, with face-to-face meetings held in February, May and August. The majority of these meetings were taken up with our administrative and financial problems, with additional meetings held with regard to our clinical symposium. As a small organisation we had previously not assigned portfolios to individuals, although individuals have been seconded to various of the subcommittees of SA Heart, to ensure CASSA participation in these committees, and more recently we have firmed up our portfolio allocation in this regard to try and ensure more focused participation on a number of levels.

Because industry is coming under increasing pressure from regulatory bodies with regard to funding of individuals, we have also assisted in the training of 3 overseas fellows during this period. This assistance has been through facilitating the support of these individuals through educational grants from industry. 2 people (1 CASSA funded) have already returned to South Africa to supplement the number of electrophysiologists in South Africa, with a further person returning in the middle of next year, and the final person at the end of next year. In addition, interest has also been forthcoming from 2 further individuals with regard to assistance for further training. Hopefully this should increase the number of trained electrophysiologists in South Africa. We are trying to assist individuals in getting exposure to electrophysiology in some form or fashion prior to their going for overseas fellowships so as to improve the training which they are able to obtain in such a fashion.

CASSA had a clinical meeting in April in Cape Town and Johannesburg with 2 overseas invited speakers, professors Martin Green and Andrew Krahn, both from Canada, with topics including syncope, palpitations, sudden death and heart failure with over 150 people attending these meetings, with very
positive feedback both from attendees and from industry in this regard. We will continue to try and have yearly meetings of a similar level.

Medical Aids as always are an ongoing issue, with funding issues becoming increasingly common. We have undertaken a number of initiatives in this regard, but unfortunately it seems to be a case of one step forward, 2 sideways and 3 backwards, and is requiring an increasing amount of time and effort to try and deal with these issues.

In the last year CASSA has had high-level interaction with the presidents of the European Heart Rhythm Association (EHRA), as well as the American Heart Rhythm Society (HRS), with opportunities going forward with both organisations to improve relationships and get assistance from them on multiple levels. There will be ongoing meetings in the next year in this regard. There are heart rhythm associations covering most of the globe, with one glaring omission being sub Saharan Africa, and in this regard early discussions have been held with PASCAR to consider some form of sub Saharan Heart Rhythm Society. There will be ongoing discussions over the next year in this regard.

In addition we have also been approached with regard to an atrial fibrillation registry, and discussions are ongoing with regard to how to pursue this further. This registry runs in a number of international organisations and would potentially allow us to compare ourselves, and our patients to other international entities.

We are very excited that Prof Rob Scott Millar has finally published his book, ECG Atlas of Cardiac Rhythms, which should hopefully be launched at the upcoming SA Heart meeting. This is a superb book, filled with clinical ECGs and wonderful commentary on these, and should be in everybody’s library. I would encourage people to seek him out at the upcoming meeting and review this exciting book.

While we have clearly had both a frustrating and fairly busy year, plans are already in place to pursue a number of the above-mentioned initiatives, as well as new initiatives in the forthcoming year. I would encourage you to attend the annual AGM on 25 October 2015 to get more detail both with regard to the previous year’s undertakings, and plans going forward.

Dr Andrew Thornton, President, CASSA

CARDIAC IMAGING SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, CISSA

Executive
Prof Rafique Essop (President), Prof Anton Doubell (Vice-President), Prof Johan Brink, Dr Phillip Herbst, Dr Robbie Kleinloog, Dr Carlos Libhaber, Prof Anthony Linegar, Prof DP Naidoo (Secretary), Dr R Nethononda, Dr Ferande Peters, Dr Darryl Smith (Treasurer), Dr Elias Zigiriadis.

The past year has been relatively quiet for CISSA with the perennial issues of training, accreditation and remuneration. Some progress was made with funders such as Momentum to reimburse the echo fee in full, but the process is still far from complete. Unfortunately, progress continues to be hampered by the fact that a large number of individuals – including technologists, physicians and anaesthetists – with questionable training and proficiency perform echocardiography, adding to the burden of limited economic resources.
In Europe and North America interventional echocardiography has almost become a field in its own right. Increasing performance of TAVR, percutaneous repair of paravalvular leak and closure of the left atrial appendage in South Africa has led to a need for training in this area and also formulation of appropriate billing codes. We hope to conduct such a course at CH-Baragwanath Hospital in the not too distant future and would encourage interested individuals to attend.

With the SA Heart Congress in Sun City less than a month away, we look forward to the pre-congress imaging workshop held in conjunction with the Mayo Clinic. The programme looks excellent and we owe a deep gratitude to the Mayo faculty who, with their combined wealth of experience, have made this a popular event in the annual cardiology calendar.

Finally, election of a new CISSA executive that is long overdue will hopefully occur soon. With injection of young blood, may imaging go from strength to strength!

Prof M. R. Essop, President, CISSA

HEART FAILURE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, HEFSSA

Executive
Eric Klug (President), Martin Mpe (Vice-President), Jens Hitzeroth (Secretary), Tony Lachman, Karen Sliwa, Darryl Smith (Treasurer), Kemi Tibazarwa. Co-opted during an Exco meeting held in March this year: Drs Andrew Asherson, Blanche Cupido, Makoali Makotoko, Len Steingo.

The Heart Failure Society of South Africa (HeFSSA) worked conscientiously during this year to ensure that we successfully achieved the goals that we set for the society for 2015.

The HeFSSA Executive is the driving force behind the programmes. HeFSSA is supported by loyal corporate members committed to programmes related to heart failure (through generous unconditional, educational grants). Our sincere appreciation goes to Amayeza, AstraZeneca, Biotronik, Boston Scientific, Meda Pharma, Medtronic, Merck, Novartis, Pharma Dynamics and Servier for their continuous support.

In addition to our continued educational focus, HeFSSA is also working on impacting on medicine supply at clinic level in the public sector (“down referral”), working with private managed care organisations to ensure adequate training for frontline staff, nurses and pharmacists, as well enhancing their systems when dealing with patients. Eric Klug was a keynote speaker at the quarterly Medical Advisors Group breakfast lecture meeting that was held in Johannesburg on 6 August 2015. The topic, “Heart Failure – Information shedding and sharing”, was well received by the audience.

HeFSSA is also impacting on Patient Empowerment through a smart phone application that has been developed by Servier and offered with HeFSSA endorsement (after extensive due diligence). Eric Klug, Lenny Steingo, Jens Hitzeroth and Karen Sliwa, in addition to other Exco members, were instrumental in this process. This application was introduced during the HeFSSA GP Program for 2015.

HeFSSA has established the annual HeFSSA Travel Award to help enhance local expertise and interest in heart failure in South Africa. We hope that knowledge gained will be shared through appropriate channels with colleagues. This award is available to cardiologists, cardiology fellows or physicians with a special interest in heart failure. The applicant must be a paid-up member of SA Heart and HeFSSA
and the accredited congress/educational programme must have a focus on Heart Failure. Two grants to maximum value of R25,000 are available and can be utilised towards air fare (economy class), congress registration, and accommodation. Please contact the HeFSSA office or go to www.hefssa.org/static/education-at-hefssa/ to apply online for the 2015 award, which is still available (at the time of writing). This award will only be available in alternate years to a prior recipient.

The HeFSSA Medical Practitioners Program continues to be of great value to the medical community as well as the pharmaceutical and device industry and it is also the main vehicle we use to achieve our educational goals. The programme started in 2010 with approximately 200 GPs, who attended the first year’s course. Since then we have offered the course annually and established it in both metropolitan and rural areas. This programme is in its sixth consecutive year and continues to be generously supported by industry: Amayeza, Boston Scientific, Medtronic, Pharma Dynamics and Servier.

The theme for 2015 was Women and Heart Failure and the topics are: Implantable devices; women and heart failure; Peri-partum cardiomyopathy; Hypertension in pregnancy and Elderly women with Heart Failure. The case-based talks for this year’s programme were compiled by Eric Klug, Andrew Asherson, Len Steingo and Karen Sliwa. Practitioners had the opportunity to earn three extra Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points by completing an online CME questionnaire. On successful completion of the questionnaire, a certificate is electronically issued. The faculty members for 2015 were HeFSSA Exco members as well as other distinguished South African cardiologist with an interest in Heart Failure: Drs. Eric Klug, Len Steingo, Simon Beshir, Jens Hitzeroth, Ronnie Jardine, Darryl Smith, Eamon Maree, Adriaan Snyders, Dave Kettles, Wayne Lubbe, Jean Vorster, Adekunle Adeyemo, Derick Aucamp, Danie Marx, Makoali Makotoko, Brian Vezi, Leslie Ponnumasy, Martin Mpe, Mongezi Milela, James Potts, Jacques DuToit, Charles Kyriakakis, Jens Hitzeroth, Sydney Blake, André Lochner and Cobus Badenhorst. This year’s meetings were held in Johannesburg, Windhoek, East Rand, Nelspruit, East London, Rustenburg, Bloemfontein, Polokwane, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Durban, Potchefstroom, George and Pretoria.

In addition, an African Outreach took place in Maputo, Mozambique, on 30 March with approximately 100 attendees where Karen Sliwa represented HeFSSA. Faculty included Profs Ana Mocumbi, Albertino Damasceno, Simon Stewart and Me Sandra Pretorius. This was a HeFSSA/PASCAR collaboration together with the local Mozambique Cardiac Society.

HeFSSA will be involved in the SA Heart Congress, 25 – 28 October 2015, at Sun City. Dr Makoali Makotoko is the organiser of the HeFSSA Congress sessions and compiled a challenging programme. All the HeFSSA members are requested to attend the HeFSSA sessions. The HeFSSA AGM for 2015 will be held during the SA Heart Congress. Please be on the lookout for further notification of the details.

HeFSSA further invested in education by hosting the annual Cardio Update for Non-Cardiologists. Servier was the sponsor with Martin Mpe and Nico van der Merwe as the convenors. This year the update took place on Sunday 25 October 2015 at Sun City from 13:00 – 17:00. Faculty members are Eric Klug, Gideon Visagie, Martin Mpe, Ronnie Jardine, Brian Vezi, Nico van der Merwe and Elsabe de Kock. (The subject was Euthanasia: Where are we in 2015?)
The HeFSSA website is continually updated. Please visit www.hefssa.org and contact the HeFSSA office to contribute. HeFSSA encourages all parties who want to be involved in Heart Failure to contact George Nel, HeFSSA Executive Officer, at info@hefssa.org to facilitate the process.

**Eric Klug, President, HeFSSA**

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**PaeDiAtrIC CARDiAC SOCIETY OF SOUTh AFRICA PCSSA**

**Executive**
Liesl Zühlke (President), Paul Adams (Vice-President), Andrew Brooks, Stephen Brown (Treasurer), John Lawrenson, Belinda Mitchell (Secretary), Lungile Pepeta.

It is a great pleasure and honour to be reporting on the activities of the Paediatric Cardiac Society of South Africa (PCSSA) over the past year: October 2014-Oct 2015.

**Introduction**
The two-year term of office of the current Executive of the PCSSA is midway after elections at the October 2014 AGM. The current executive committee is: Liesl Zühlke (President), Paul Adams (Vice-President), Belinda Mitchell (Secretary), Stephen Brown (Treasurer), Andrew Brooks (Training), Lungile Pepeta (Private Practice), John Lawrenson (Ethics and Training).

We bade farewell to Jeff Harrisberg, Ebrahim Hoosen and Christopher Hugo-Hamman last year and thanked them most sincerely for years of dedication to the society. All three played a major role in the past years in the lead-up to our World Congress. For this we are especially thankful.

I would like to thank all the members of the executive for their hard work, dedication and commitment. In particular, their support and help is deeply appreciated, both personally and from all the members of our society.

**Financial statement for year ended 31 March 2015 audited**
We are pleased to report that the Society is in a good financial position. The Annual Financial Statement for year was prepared by our Treasurer, Prof Stephen Brown. Expenses over the past financial year related to local committee expenses, the Silverman Educational road show and significant sponsorship of nurses and local meetings. These nurses were sponsored from each of the local private and public hospital units in order to attend the World Congress in 2014 and two fellows were sponsored to attend SCAI 2014. Thank you to Prof Brown for absolutely sterling work as the treasurer over many years; his dedication and guardianship is great appreciated.

**2013 World Congress legacy projects**
There were several significant legacy projects identified after the congress. The first was our website, which has been completely restructured and redesigned with a new logo based on the world congress logo and content. This has been integrated with social media platforms and we plan to extend the brand further with medical content, interaction within units in the country and possibly extending also our content and messages to family. There are already substantial resources on the website. We intend to build a repository of images, cases, quizzes and relevant publications. We are also including functionality to allow for access to future live cases or seminars via the website. We hope to offer this as an option to both our members and to members of our affiliated PASCAR sites. This could be viewed as both a training and collaborative opportunity – with ward rounds/fellow training/cases.
A second legacy project was the collaboration between Pedheart Resource and the patient and professional information portal. This has been up and running for some time and allows patients to download – or for doctors to download on their behalf – hand-outs relating to common cardiac conditions. We are thrilled that the first translations of the patient information leaflets will soon be available for download. Our thanks go to Paul Adams for spearheading this initiative. A major goal for the new term is to actively market and promote our website to general paediatricians and all who are caring for children with heart disease. We urge you to spread the news.

A major project planned for 2015 is a World Congress legacy research fund, which will be used to support paediatric cardiac services research within the country. It was decided to split this into two initiatives: One to stimulate publication, and the second to aid travel to courses, training and short periods of sabbatical, both for trainees and for public service practitioners. It is well known that congress attendance is sponsored (albeit not to a major extent these days) on receipt of abstracts. However, courses such as Cardiology in the young or MRI/echo courses are not covered by the traditional sponsorship means. We are thus funding these significantly and will award the first of these in January 2016. In addition, we have decided to sponsor prizes for the best publications each year, from trainees and from consultants (both private and public), to encourage post-graduate studies and original research. We envisage that these will eventually become industry-sponsored prizes and will be a small incentive towards publication from our academic units.

Another legacy project announced last year has been the promotion and support of pulse-oximetry screening within selected units within the country. It has been clear to all those working in congenital heart disease in this country that there is a significant diagnostic gap, with critical congenital heart disease still going unrecognised. It remains our major priority to improve awareness of congenital heart disease, the diagnosis and management of the condition and building the infrastructure in terms of diagnostic and treatment facilities. We have addressed general paediatricians at both recent South African Paediatric Association and local paediatric management meetings, as well as management of private hospital groups regarding this practice. Alongside this, we are continuing our conversation with the Department of Health to address the inadequacies for paediatric cardiac services, in particular, in certain provinces in the country. Although still in the fledgling phase, we think that this will gain significant momentum in conjunction with another collaboration planned for 2016.

The revenue raised over the past years has also allowed us to partially sponsor a few academic activities over the past two years. The first was the Oliver Stümper interventional workshop held in Cape Town in 2014 and the second was the Normal Silverman road show held last year. Prof Silverman had the opportunity to visit several units around the country, give lectures and participate in academic activities. This was well received by all units and he was very appreciative of the hospitality shown to him in other provinces.

Academics

1. We have an exciting congress ahead this year, ably headed up by Profs Brown, Smit and Andre Brooks. The two international speakers bring a host of experience and diverse interests to the congress. We have a full parallel programme to enjoy while the PCSSA speakers will also deliver lectures within the plenary programme. Paediatric cardiology will feature prominently at SA Heart Congress 2015, with a dedicated track running daily from Sunday 25 – Wednesday 28 October, at Sun City in North West Province. A wide spread of important interventional and surgical aspects will be covered during the congress, with delegates benefiting from the input of international experts Dr Naser Ammash (Mayo Clinic, USA), Associate Professor Christian Brizard (Australia) and Dr Elchanan Bruckheimer (Israel). Local faculty will include
heads of cardiology at the Red Cross Children’s Hospital, Chris Hani Baragwanath, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Walter Sisulu University and the University of the Free State.

2. The paediatric programme commences on Sunday afternoon, 25 October, with a pre-congress post-graduate course focusing on paediatric heart failure. A workshop format will be used to generate open discussion with prominent local paediatric cardiologists, who will review important new approaches and therapies becoming available for children with cardiac failure.

3. Dr Ammash will highlight advances in echocardiography that are being used to evaluate and monitor heart failure in adults, and may also be of benefit to children. Modern treatment with biventricular pacing will be discussed, with Associate Professor Brizard ending the session by giving a perspective on the surgical advances available for treatment – from left ventricular assist devices to cardiac transplant.

4. The AGM for the PCSSA will be held immediately after the course, from 17h00 – 18h00, with the Congress being officially opened at 18h00, followed by a “Night Food Market Theme” and trade preview in the Superbowl from 19h00 – 21h00. Our thanks go to the organisers and the entire local faculty for their time, dedication and efforts in making this a wonderful congress for us all to enjoy.

5. The South African Paediatric Association congress will be held in September 2016 at Durban International Convention Centre. Previously, the PCSSA played a role at this meeting. Next year’s meeting will be convened by Dr Andiswa Msimela, who has already started with the programme. We look forward to helping in any way. I would like us to consider a booth, to encourage non-cardiologists to join our society, to encourage in particular pulse-oximetry screening in their local and particularly private practices and to raise the profile of the PCSSA. There has been great interest from general paediatricians for further cardiology teaching and we would like to explore ways of doing this in the following year.

6. Congress of the Pan African Society of Cardiology, PASCAR, 2015: Due to the turmoil in Tunisia, Mauritius was chosen for the PASCAR conference at short notice. As an affiliate member, we are keen to foster a closer collaboration with our African colleagues and we will be presenting at PASCAR both in congenital and acquired heart disease sections. We will also be participating in the Paediatric and RHD PASCAR task forces and hope to contribute to that important initiative.

7. CSI Africa 2015: CSI Africa (Catheter Interventions in Congenital, Structural and Valvar Heart Disease) will be in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2015. This workshop will once again offer a comprehensive overview of the most important catheter therapies of congenital, structural and valvar heart disease in children and adults. CSI addresses the needs of adult and paediatric interventionists, cardiovascular surgeons, anaesthesiologists, imaging specialists, and colleagues of other disciplines who wish to know more about the field. This year CSI is concentrating on African faculty and several PCSSA members will be supporting faculty. Several cath labs are starting all over neighbouring countries and we support these important initiatives.

8. World Congress of the World Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons in Cape Town 2016: This congress is organised by the South African Society of Thoracic surgeons and the 17th Annual Congress of SA Heart will be part of this World Congress. John Lawrenson and Alfonso Pecoraro are involved in organising the SA Heart programme of this joined congress. This promises to be an exciting programme with interventions and a strong surgical programme represented by Andre Brooks. Alongside this conference will be a one-day RHD programme organised by Liesl Zuhlke and Prof Peter Zilla. Our thanks to John Lawrenson and Andre Brooks for representing us so ably on this committee.
9. World Congress of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Health 2016: This will be held in Mexico City in June next year. Liesl Zuhlke is part of the organising committee and the programme features congenital heart disease (cardiology and cardiac surgery pre-congress workshops, GUCH and adolescent and child health) and acquired heart disease.

10. An interactive paediatric interventional cardiac catheterisation workshop was held at Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital in the last week of July. The aims were to teach paediatric cardiac catheterisation to “those with more enthusiasm than experience” and hopefully to broadcast all proceedings live from the cath lab to an audience in an on-campus auditorium as well as those logged on online. Approximately 40 delegates, including a strong faculty representing all the paediatric cardiology centres in South Africa, and cardiologists from six other African countries, attended the workshop. The overall theme was to present cases from simple to complex, with background lectures ranging from step-by-step descriptions of procedures to information and advice around the practice and art of interventional cardiac catheterisation. In total, 17 live cases were performed in four days. Broadcasts to the auditorium at Red Cross Hospital allowed for lively interaction with the cathing team; many very instructive cases were observed (read: one learns much from the mistakes of others). Unfortunately, that week a nationwide problem with Internet connectivity curtailed our Internet interaction and during the week only 12 sites could log in. Feedback has been very positive, with all requesting repeat workshops. Rik Decker and his team are already planning another CATHCHAT for March 2016, when Red Cross Hospital will be hosting Dr Oliver Stumper from Birmingham Children’s Hospital, UK. Congratulations on this excellent initiative which has benefitted all in the society as well as those outside of our geographical borders. Please let us know if you are planning similar workshops, short courses or seminars, in order to disseminate this information to all our members.

Travel awards
A new fellowship was established last year, which will allow two fellows to attend the fellow interventional course in Nevada in December. The fellowship is worth R25 000 this year and is co-sponsored by the course itself, covering registration and accommodation with the additional funds for travel expenses. Last year’s recipients were Liesel Andrag and Cerri Greig.

Congratulations
Firstly, a huge congratulations to Dr Hopewell Ntsinjana, who returned to Johannesburg this year after a fellowship in London where he gained his PhD from the University College London. We are extremely proud of Hopewell and his amazing work on cardiac MRI and wish him and his family a warmest welcome home and fruitful pursuits in his old stomping ground.

We have several new fellows around the country. We welcome them and wish them an enjoyable and productive time learning the paediatric cardiology ropes. There are also two fellows from outside South Africa: Fenny Shidika from Namibia, who has started in Cape Town, and Yamikani Chimalizeni from Malawi. A special welcome to you both. Please feel very welcome in our community.

A new paediatric cardiologists in our midst is Adele Greyling from Port Elizabeth, who is now in Leuven doing an EP fellowship. Congratulations and we look forward to your return and future contribution to our discipline and society.

In 2015 we awarded Dr Christopher Hugo-Hamman an honorary lifetime membership of the PCSSA. Chris’s role as a staunch advocate for children’s cardiac services, his stalwart leadership in his terms
as President of the PCSSA and his extraordinary vision around the World Congress deserves this and so much more. Congratulations Chris, your influence within our society is far-reaching and profound, and hopefully will continue for many years!

Finally, Barend Fourie took up a position in Cape Town this year. Well done on the post, Barend, and welcome to the cold Cape winter. I hope you will be extremely fulfilled in your new post.

We would like to keep up with all the news from around the paediatric cardiac services community. Please email me or send news snippets to lindy.mitchell@up.ac.za

The year ahead
There are several goals for the new year ahead:

- We need a complete database of all practitioners involved in the management and treatment of children with heart disease are not members of SA Heart not PCSSA. It is our aim to have as complete a database of these colleagues as possible, to involve them in our society and activities. We also wish to spread our reach to more general paediatricians, involve patient and parent groups and build closer collaboration with the Department of Health. It is clear that we do not know all the new fellows, and thus we would like to be relevant to all our members.

- We are also working with Prof Sliwa, SA Heart President, and Prof Mocumbi, Paediatric task force PASCAR, to complete a detailed situational analysis of paediatric cardiac services in Africa. We thank you all in anticipation for the assistance in this regard.

- We also intend to be more relevant to all our members, focus on the new generation of trainees and provide more input into issues of ethics and advocacy for children. It has also always been a goal to develop and encourage a research ethic within our membership. We would like to use our research fund to build on this foundation and to encourage more postgraduate degrees within our organisation. We would like to start with our research fund but also to support those fellows undertaking MMeds or M Phils with mentorship and practical help.

- Two areas of growing interest are adults with congenital heart disease and specialised paediatric cardiac surgery. These are two training areas that we would like to address in the near future.

- Our final goal for the coming year is to further develop our website, in conjunction with the information portal, into a more accessible, vibrant and interactive site that facilitates conversations between practitioners and patient/parent groups, and also to focus on promoting advocacy for our children. We have identified certain advocacy groups and will work together with these to improve the visibility of children with heart disease.

My thanks to my colleagues on the Executive of the PCSSA for their hard work and support thus far.

Dr Liesl Zühlke, Specialist Paediatrician/Paediatric Cardiologist
President, Paediatric Cardiac Society of South Africa
The South African Society for Cardiovascular Research (SASCAR), an interest group of the SA Heart Association, was created in October 2009.

The SASCAR Executive Committee elected in July 2014 for a two-year of office is: Prof Sandrine Lecour (Chairperson), Dr Neil Davies (Treasurer), Miss Sylvia Dennis (Secretary), Dr Derick van Vuuren, Prof Faadiel Essop, Prof Karen Sliwa.

Workshops
Since our last report, SASCAR has successfully organised well-attended workshops on various topics:
1. Biomarkers and Heart Failure, led by Prof Karen Sliwa (University of Cape Town) in February 2015. This SASCAR workshop was closely linked to a novel collaborative agreement between the University of Cape Town (Prof Sliwa) and the University of Paris VII (Prof Mebazza). Prof Jane-Lise Samuel (Paris) discussed novel biomarkers for acute heart failure while Prof Mebazza presented new insights into the post-translation modifications of natriuretic peptides. Prof Etienne Gayat (Paris), the last guest speaker of the workshop, introduced the audience to the Global Research on Acute Conditions Team (GREAT) Association, which is an international network between experts operating in the management of acute clinical conditions in the field of Emergency Medicine.

2. SASCAR and Bio-Rad team up for Western Blotting Workshop, led by Dr Derick van Vuuren (University of Stellenbosch)
To facilitate an exchange of thoughts and ideas on the challenges related to Western blot analysis, SASCAR partnered with Bio-Rad, the Division of Medical Physiology (Stellenbosch University), Anatech and the Physiology Society of Southern Africa (PSSA) to host a workshop addressing the basic techniques, new technology and new approaches in Western Blotting. Twenty-seven postgraduate students and researchers from Stellenbosch University, the University of Cape Town and the Medical Research Council were shown demonstrations of traditional techniques associated with Western Blotting as well as the advantages of using new technology such as the TransBlot Turbo-Doc and Chemi-Doc systems. Both these systems incorporate advances in technology to enhance the speed and accuracy of Blotting.

Meetings
1. SA Heart Meeting 2014
An exciting programme was put in place by SASCAR with four sessions specifically dedicated to cardiovascular research with various topics ranging from stem cell research to cardiac mitochondrial signalling. Our international guest speaker, Prof Rainer Schulz from the University of Giessen, Germany, made fantastic efforts to scientifically interact with all scientists, with the aim of motivating the new generation of researchers. Dr Derick van Vuuren from the University of Stellenbosch gave a very stimulating and controversial talk on “Protein phosphatase 2A: the black sheep in cardioprotection”. He was also warmly welcomed as a new Committee Member of SASCAR.

2. SASCAR at the ISHR meeting once again
For the second year in a row, SASCAR has been invited by the International Society for Heart Research (ISHR) European section to hold a joint session at their annual meeting in Bordeaux, France, 1 – 4 July 2015. In this session dedicated to cardiovascular biomaterials and regenerative medicine, Prof Neil Davies from the University of Cape Town delivered a talk on injectable biomaterials therapy for heart failure. Another internationally acclaimed speaker in this session was Prof Thomas Eschenhagen from
the University of Hamburg, Germany, who delivered a talk on engineered heart tissues for cardiac repair. Despite the heat wave in Bordeaux on that day and the lack of air conditioning in the conference room, the session was extremely well attended.

*Prof Sandrine Lecour, Chairperson, SASCAR*

**SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOVASCULAR INTERVENTION, SASCI**

Executive
D Kettles (President), F Hellig (Ex-officio President), A Horak (Vice-President), M Abelson (Secretary), G Angel, C Badenhorst (Treasurer), S Khan, M Ntsekhe, JP Theron, J Vorster, C Zambakides. Industry Exco members: T du Preez, A Sartor, D Willemse.

It is my honour to take over the reins of a society which has such an important role to play in the ever-changing cardiovascular health care environment.

I would like to thank the South African Society of Cardiovascular Intervention (SASCI) members for attending the AGM during AfricaPCR and for their contribution to the election of a new executive committee and office-bearers. A society is only as strong as its members and is highly reliant on willing contributors to get involved in order to give guidance to the broader cardiology environment that we operate in.

Farrel Hellig has stepped down as President after the maximum of two two-year terms as President and will continue to advise and guide the Exco as Ex-officio President. Farrel has handed over a society full of drive and inspiration. Whilst attending EuroPCR recently, it occurred to me that like few before him, Farrel has succeeded in putting SA interventionists on the map. His 12 years of service on the Exco and especially the four years that he served as President are appreciated by all the members of the society. I know that I will frequently be knocking on his door over the next months and years. Farrel, thank you so much for the integrity, competence, and huge vision that you have so generously shared over the years. Yours is a hard act to follow! Len Steingo and Graham Cassel also stood down after numerous years of active contribution to the society. Graham was involved from the inception of SASCI as originator Exco member and made key contributions to create the dynamic society we have today and deserves special recognition for his years as President and ex-officio. Len has always been a hard worker, and persistent contributor doing much uncelebrated but vital work in varied committees. Gentleman, thank you. Your contributions make us what we are and will not be forgotten.

I am pleased to welcome Gavin Angel, who has joined the team. The following members continue on the Exco until 2017: D Kettles (President), F Hellig (Ex-officio President), A Horak (Vice-President), C Badenhorst (Treasurer), M Abelson (Secretary), S Khan, M Ntsekhe, C Zambakides, J Vorster, G Angel and JP Theron.

Industry Exco members carry on until the AGM 2016: Tracey du Preez, Dan Willemse and Andrew Sartor. We acknowledge your vital roles.
The following SASCI educational initiatives took place:

SASCI Rota Workshop for experienced interventionalists
The convener of these meetings is Adie Horak. In January 2014, more than 50 delegates attended the first exploratory meeting, including delegates from Kenya, Namibia and Mauritius. In March 2015 an expert meeting was held and more than 25 delegates attended.

Visiting Professor Program
The 2015 Visiting Professor Program was a huge success. Prof Jean Marco visited South Africa from 15 March to 15 May. His passion for teaching and the quality of his lectures and discussions accentuate the standard that is the core of this programme. Not only did he give of his valuable time, knowledge and expertise, he also gave a part of himself to the patients, doctors and staff of the hospitals where he was positioned. The value of his mammoth input will live on long after his departure. If you are interested, look at his blog on the EuroPCR website, and you will get a flavour of his contributions. In due course we will be announcing further visitors to our country: I continue to be amazed at the calibre and the enthusiasm of those we have been privileged to learn from.

The 2016 Visiting Professor has been confirmed and we are proud to announce that Professor Gus Pichard (United States of America) will be the next Visiting Professor. We are further investigating the possibility of another international superstar visiting in 2017! The consistent and long-standing support from Medtronic and Pharma Dynamic is noted and appreciated.

Boston Scientific RC Fraser International Fellowship
Ahmed Vachiat (Cardiology Consultant at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital) was at Prof Simon Redwood’s unit in March 2015 and the feedback regarding his experience and participation are very positive. Pieter van der Bijl (Tygerberg) went in April 2015. With GMC certification he was able to gain hands-on experience as well. Both colleagues gave very positive feedback regarding a truly formative fellowship made possible by generous sponsorships.

SCAI Fall Fellows Course
Four of our South African interventional cardiology fellows once again attended the Annual SCAI Interventional Cardiology Fellows Course (USA). The Society for Cardiac Angiography and Interventions (SCAI) programme brings wonderful enrichment to our local fellows training and the successful candidates for 2015 were Jane Moses, Mukesh Chhiba, Andile Xana and Parmanand Naran. This programme is sponsored by SCAI, SASCI and Boston Scientific.

EuroPCR Course 2015
The world-leading course in interventional medicine took place from Tuesday 19 – Friday 22 May 2015 in Paris, France. SASCI hosted a dual session with the Irish. Thanks to our members who supported this session. There were numerous South African faces to be seen on panels and presenting in a number of different fora. Thank you to our colleagues for your hard work at this meeting and for the quality contributions that were made.

SASCI Fellows Workshop
This is an integral part of SASCI’s public and private partnership which exposes “cardiologists in training” to operators in private sector practice as well as colleagues from other public sector units in South Africa and beyond. This event was once again attended by 80% of Cardiology Fellows in South Africa as well as a few recently-qualified South African cardiologists and six colleagues from Ethiopia, Mauritius and Kenya; 40 doctors in total and 20 members from industry.
Drs Jean Vorster and Cobus Badenhorst convened our 2015 training course with faculty members Jean Vorster, Dave Kettles, Gavin Angel, Chris Zambakides, Cobus Badenhorst, Farrel Hellig, Adie Horak and Shaheen Pandie. We covered a lot of ground over two days: This programme continues to be tweaked to meet the expressed needs of our trainees, and its attendance attests to the effectiveness of the programme.

Educational activities planned for later this year:

**SA Heart Congress 2015**
The 16th Annual SA Heart Congress will be taking place this year from Sunday 25 – Wednesday 28 October at Sun City in the North West Province. Robert Burns is an excellent and versatile Irish speaker who has accepted the invitation to be the SASCI international speaker at SA Heart. Sajidah Khan, SASCI congress convener, is also organising a pre-congress Radial Course. More information will be distributed to all SASCI members as the details are confirmed.

**CTO Workshop**
The date for the meeting is 20 – 21 November and will consist of lectures, live cases and canned cases. The organising committee is: Chris Zambakides, Jean Vorster, Gavin Angel and Anthony Becker, with Farrel Hellig assisting. This looks to be a very useful couple of days for anyone considering tackling this ultimate frontier of PCI. The faculty includes international experts such as Prof Galassi and Simon Walsh, and the course will be well structured with a great balance between watching cases and absorbing didactic teaching, from the basics to the most complex.

**ESC e-learning**
This is a training module with the focus on training in interventional cardiology. Sajidah Khan is the national co-ordinator. If you need further clarification or if you are interested in enrolling, please e-mail Sajidah Khan at khans19@ukzn.ac.za or contact the SASCI office with all communication at sasci@sasci.co.za.

**Other activities where SASCI has been actively involved:**
**Coding Guideline (handbook)**
JP Theron must be acknowledged for his tireless work and endless hours spent in compiling a coding handbook for cardiology that was communicated to members. We are still facing the problem where even with inclusion in the South African Medical Association (SAMA), DBM individual funders (administrators) still need to, firstly, decide to include new codes in their coding structure and then decide on the funding level. The Exco received a mandate from their members to officially publish the first edition of the coding guideline and to engage the major funders and explain the coding handbook as a position statement of SASCI. The manual will also be supplied to CMS and other third parties (including practice management and those involved in claiming). The coding handbook is a guideline on how to code appropriately, based on peer group agreement, and as such is a powerful tool. SASCI will keep their members updated on the status and new developments. We believe that the publishing of this guideline will be of enormous assistance to our members when they encounter various queries from funders. This environment and contact with funders is frankly becoming increasingly difficult and at times combatorial: We will need to carefully chart these waters in the months ahead.

**Competition Commission**
The Competition Commission’s period for submissions has been extended by six months. Members agreed during the AGM that SASCI needs to secure legal opinion to submit a full submission to Competition Commission (rather than just responding to “allegations”). We have now submitted a document in close co-operation with our legal adviser.
Alternate Reimbursement Model (Global)
During the 2014 AGM members supported our discussions with Discovery Health on development of a voluntary Global Fee structure. SASCI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Discovery Health, but not all SASCI members have as yet been approached to discuss the proposal (voluntary participation). SASCI continue to engage with Discovery Health on these matters on behalf of the members. A SASCI Peer Review Board has also been established, that will review the uptake of this programme by members and advise members on issues pertaining to use of the episode fee. Thanks to our colleagues Tony Dalby, Saleem Dawood, Basil Levetan, Dave Gillmer and Adriaan Snyders who have already met as this board, which will function independently of SASCI Exco.

The Protection of Private Information (POPI) Act:
An extensive review has been developed by Elsabe Klinck and has been circulated to SASCI members. We hope that this type of information is adding tangible value to our members’ practices.

ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) Education:
I need to acknowledge the tireless and consistent effort by Adriaan Snyders and his team towards ensuring that we save heart muscle by appropriate reperfusion treatment. More comprehensive reviews are available elsewhere, but suffice to say that Adriaan needs our support and tangible assistance to address this mammoth task. Much is currently being done across the length and breadth of the country in terms of educational initiatives. This is a key area where the input of interventional cardiologists surely is mandatory.

Interventional Society of Cath Lab Allied Professionals (ISCAP):
Dianne Kerrigan and her team continue to astound us with their vision and effective roll-out. The impact of their effort should be noticeable during each and every procedure! Read more elsewhere.

The following corporate supporters have been committed to our society and have been supporting education in Cardiology in South Africa for many years: Amayeza, Angio Quip, Aspen, AstraZeneca, Baroque, B Braun, Biotronik, Boston, Cardiac Output, Condor Medical, Cordis, Edwards, Logan Medical and Surgical, Medtronic, Obsidian, Paragmed, Pharma Dynamics, Sanofi, Surgical Innovations, Torque Medical and Volcano. We are looking forward to continuing and expanding our professional collaboration. We thank you for your generosity, and acknowledge your immense contributions.

I wish to assure our members that the SASCI Exco will continue to work tirelessly to represent your interests, educate, and inform interventional cardiologists in our country. We deeply value and need your support. Please feel free to get involved at any time. By all means, let us know if and where we can be further assistance to you as you deliver the best service possible to your patients.

Dave Kettles, President, SASCI

SURGICAL INTEREST GROUP OF SA HEART

Executive
Dr Robbie Kleinloog (President), Prof Johan Brink, Prof Anthony Linegar, Dr Elias Zigiriadis.

The surgical Special Interest Group (SIG) has focussed much of its efforts this past year on furthering initiatives which were initiated in previous years.
The annual visiting surgeons sponsored by Edwards Laboratories saw Dr Patrick Perrier undertaking a tour of several units around the country and giving a lecture series on mitral valve repair. These lectures were well attended and in many respects successful, so much so that many cardiology colleagues attended. We wish to extend our gratitude to Edwards Life Sciences for supporting this initiative.

In the first quarter of this year the President of the Israeli Society of Cardiac Surgeons visited units in all major centres. This was at the invitation of the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons of South Africa and further to negotiations regarding the affiliation of the two societies and the setting up of, and educational exchange programme between, the two countries. The programme has now been cemented in principle and surgeons from South Africa will visit Israel and get exposure to advanced technology, whereas local surgeons will host their counterparts in clinical situations. This should be to the mutual benefit of both societies' members. This programme will include surgeons in training as well as those at consultant level.

Initially, three centres have been identified as recipient units, namely, the academic units in Johannesburg, Bloemfontein and Cape Town. These units will co-operate with the private units in their provinces to host visiting surgeons in as many units as possible so as to offer the widest exposure.

Funding is presently being sought for this project.

In addition to this, the two societies have agreed to have a joint session at their respective annual meetings.

Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons (SOCTS) have been awarded the hosting of the 2016 World Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons meeting. After much discussion, agreement has been reached to include the SA Heart meeting during this event and much effort and energy has been and is being directed toward the organization of this meeting which will take place in Cape Town at the CTICC from 9-11 September 2016.

A local organizing committee has been put together in association with the Western Cape branch of the SA Heart Association.

For this reason, SOCTS has forfeited the biennial meeting in favour of hosting the international meeting in 2016, and will participate fully at the 2015 SA Heart meeting.

Various meetings have been held with funders regarding fees and structures.

*Mr Robert Kleinloog, Chairman, Surgical Interest Group*

**SPECIAL AFFILIATED GROUP REPORT**

**LIPID AND ATHEROSCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, LASSA**

**Executive**

Prof David Marais (President), Prof Frederick Raal (Secretary), Dr Z Bayat, Dr Dee Blackhurst, Dr Dirk Blom, Dr Chiman Rajput.
The Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society of Southern Africa (LASSA) remains affiliated to both the South African Heart Association (SA Heart) and the Society for Endocrinology and Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa (SEMDSA), but at the discussion in October 2014 it was decided that owing to its links with SEMDSA, a different category should be created, a specially affiliated group instead of a Special Interest Group (SIG), as LASSA could not meet the criteria for a SIG. The affiliations with SA Heart and SEMDSA date to 2006 and 1989 respectively.

LASSA remains a small group operating chiefly as an academic body covering inherited disorders of lipid and lipoprotein metabolism, atherosclerosis, nutrition, epidemiology and pharmacotherapy. Expertise in the diagnosis and management of severe dyslipidaemias remains mainly at the Groote Schuur (Cape Town) and Charlotte Maxeke (Johannesburg) teaching hospitals, while a few other teaching hospitals also manage severe dyslipidaemias but have less active clinical and laboratory services. Special laboratory testing for severe dyslipidaemias and metabolic errors in lipid metabolism is currently limited to the lipid laboratory within the Division of Chemical Pathology in Cape Town and was supported by the Medical Research Council of South Africa, but this support is now ending.

The bi-annual LASSA conference in association with SEMDSA was held in Bloemfontein in April, where attendance was unfortunately small. The general meeting of members was small and thus it was decided to continue with the standing committee. The leadership continues with Prof David Marais and the secretarial function with Prof Derick Raal. The other committee members are: Dr Z Bayat, Dr Dee Blackhurst, Dr Dirk Blom and Dr Chiman Rajput.

Newsletters update the membership of LASSA and SA Heart on new developments when international meetings are attended by the LASSA members, which is now much less often owing to limited support for research and the strained working environment at medical schools. Membership with the International Atherosclerosis Society will continue.

Concerns about sustaining the expertise in lipidology remain as academic careers are not available to attract clinical or scientific graduates. Internal medicine and paediatric medicine training does not expose the postgraduate student to lipidology and chemical pathology exposure during training is to routine tests only. Cardiology training also does not involve exposure to lipid disorders and more specialized management. Ideally, specialist cardiology training should include exposure to lipidology, with trainees spending some time at a lipid clinic.

South African centres continue to contribute to the study of new pharmacotherapy in homozygous and severe heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia, including lomitapide (MTP inhibitor) and monoclonal antibodies to PCSK9, with publications in prestigious journals. For South Africa to continue participating in these studies it is essential to retain and expand the capability to make accurate clinical diagnoses and confirm them on a molecular level. Co-operation between the private and public sector is important to ensure all patients access to lipid expertise.

The finances of LASSA remain sound as there is little demand for administration and a significant reserve is required to ensure that congresses can take place in the current trend of declining support from industry.

A. D. Marais, University of Cape Town and National Health Laboratory Service, President, LASSA
F. J. Raal, Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital and University of Witwatersrand, LASSA
BRANCH REPORTS

BLOEMFONTEIN BRANCH

Not received in time for publication.

DURBAN BRANCH

President S Khan, President
Secretary R K Naidu, Secretary
Treasurer J Patel, Treasurer

Following the hosting of the 2014 SA Heart National Congress in Durban, we were appreciative of the many positive messages received from colleagues both nationally and internationally. A spin-off of the success of the congress was that the local branch received a share of the profits, which further boosted our healthy coffers.

We continue to hold our quarterly academic meetings that are well supported by local members. We have used the meetings as a platform to generate support for the national ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) project and, although uptake appears slow, we will continue to persevere. We have been very fortunate to have Pharmadynamics sponsor our meetings and this has allowed us to enlist the services of Medical Society Management (George Nel) in running the organization of the meetings. Our AGM has been scheduled for early October with the final meeting of the year taking place at the end of November.

Dr Sajidah Khan, President, SA Heart KZN branch

JOHANNESBURG BRANCH

The Johannesburg branch committee remains as: David Jankelow (President and Treasurer), Antoinette Cilliers (Secretary), Gcina Dumani, Eric Klug, Andrew Thornton, Darryl Smith, Pravin Manga, Keir McCutcheon, Ahmed Vachiat, George Dragne, Gavin Angel.

The South African Society of Cardiovascular Intervention (SASCI) 2015 Visiting Professor from March to May 2015 was Prof Jean Marco. The Johannesburg Branch was fortunate to co-host him with SASCI for our first meeting in March. This was an evening of entertaining discussion of ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) management. There was much audience participation. Prof. Marco’s passion for teaching, as well as the quality of his lecture and discussions, mark the high standard of this annual programme.

Our annual Fellows Cardiology Fellows’ morning was held in May. This was a very informative meeting.

Dr Mamokgethi Moshe was awarded a first prize of R1 500 for the presentation: “Dysplastic Tricuspid Valve with giant right atrium – Report on two cases”.

The other excellent speakers were awarded R1 000 for their presentations: Dr D. Zachariah: “Between a Clot and a Hard Place”; Dr G. Mukeshimana: “Time to Lysis”; Dr B Brits: “Correlation between hepatomegaly and cardiac echo findings”.

We are in the process of organizing a large symposium on Cardiology funding/Private practice issues. This will include some of the larger medical aid societies, legal experts to discuss ongoing issues that affect those in private practice, such as the Protection of Private Information Act, and various others.
We are hoping that the Public Protector, Advocate Thuli Madonsela, will agree to speak at our AGM at the end of the year.

Our financial position remains very good.

We have decided to award local cardiology fellows a research scholarship of R10 000 after successful application to our committee with a relevant/appropriate protocol. There will be a selection process and we will require ongoing updates regarding these projects. We will also request that fellows present their work at Branch meetings.

Once again, we are extremely appreciative for the sponsorship of Litha Pharmaceuticals for our local branch meetings.

I have now served the branch as both President and Treasurer. I am extremely appreciative to have filled both of these positions.

David Jankelow, President and Treasurer, Johannesburg Branch

PRETORIA BRANCH

The next SA Heart Pretoria Branch Chairperson, and office-bearers, will be elected during the AGM at the SA Heart Congress 2016. At this stage, however, we have two vacant positions, i.e., secretary and treasurer. Although these functions are mostly handled by the Medsoc branch office, we would still like to fill the positions.

It brings me great pleasure to report back on our Branch meetings held in 2015. The first meeting took place on 25 February at the regular venue, Kream Restaurant. Twelve doctors attended the meeting comprising a lecture given by Prof Gert Saayman on the topic of “Medical Legal Advice for cardiologists, with cardio case studies and discussion on death certificates”. The attendees found the topic very informative.

Our second meeting was held at the Alpine Attitude Boutique Hotel in collaboration with the South African Society of Cardiovascular Intervention (SASCI). We hosted the legendary interventional Cardiologist from France, Prof Jean Marco. The topic of his talk was “Management and technical strategy for a patient presenting with an ST-elevation myocardial infarction”, with the aim of interactively sharing knowledge and experience of patients with ST-elevation myocardial infarction, while focusing on their clinical situation, particularities, local experience and constraints as well as best available evidence. The aim also was to find consensus with South African colleagues on a method of reasoning that may help the group to develop answers to the fundamental questions that impact them daily. It was a great presentation which led to lively interactive discussions. The 2015 VPP evening lecture series was definitely a huge success according to the feedback we received from the 36 delegates who attended the meetings.

For our third meeting we asked Professor Paul Rheeder, a specialist physician with a PhD in Clinical Epidemiology, to talk about “A Cardiologist’s guide to assessing a journal article; crash course for Cardio’s in bio statistics.” He discussed the The CvLPRIT Trial (Randomized Trial of Complete VersusLesion-Only Revascularization in Patients Undergoing Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention for STEMI and Multivessel Disease) and RELY trial (Dabigatran versus Warfarin in Patients with Atrial Fibrillation) during his presentation.
Our fourth meeting was held on 5 August at Kream Restaurant in Brooklyn. Professor Frederick Raal from University of the Witwatersrand was the speaker and he discussed PCSK9 inhibitors. This meeting was once again well attended by our SA Heart members.

Our final meeting for 2015 will take place on 25 November at Villa Sterne. We are inviting all our members to attend, including the Allied Professionals working in the Cathlab environment. During this meeting we ask our members to bring your worst and your best case for discussions.

Members must please note that all our meetings are Continuing Professional Development (CPD) accredited.

We also offer support in the form of a financial sponsorship to the SA Heart Congress 2016. Please contact George at george@medsoc.co.za for more information. Please contact me (drioebrahim@gmail.com) or the MSM office (events@medsoc.co.za) if you wish to make a contribution at future meetings or to propose appropriate programmes for Pretoria.

I would like to thank Pharma Dynamics for their continued support and for making this multi-evening lecture planning possible.

*Iftikhar Ebrahim, Chairperson, Pretoria Branch*

**WESTERN CAPE BRANCH**

Prof Anton Doubell (President), Prof Johan Brink (Vice President), Dr Alfonso Pecoraro (Treasurer), Dr Liesl Zühlke (Secretary)

First impressions are that the Western Cape branch is a vibrant and exciting branch reflecting the synergism between the former Tygerberg and Cape Town branches that have amalgamated to form the branch.

The inaugural meeting of the new branch was held on the 4th February 2015 at Tygerberg Hospital. The academic meeting was a great success. John Lawrenson gave a thought provoking talk on the cath labs in Africa and new models of intervention for the future. This was followed by excellent case presentations from the Tygerberg team.

Following the academic component the interim executive was introduced to the members: Chair Prof Doubell, Vice-chair Prof Brink Treasurer Alfonso Pecararo, Secretary Liesl Zühlke and members: Philip Herbst Jens Hitzeroth, Karen Sliwa-Hanle, Hellmuth Weich. The main item on the agenda of the meeting that followed was the SA Heart Congress in 2016, which will be presented in conjunction with the World Society of Thoracic, and Cardiothoracic Surgeons in Cape Town from the 8th to 11th of September 2016. The local organising committee from the branch is spearheaded by Alfonso Pecararo, John Lawrenson, Anton Doubell and Karen Sliwa Hanle.

The next academic meeting was held on Wednesday, May 13th at the Christiaan Barnard Transplant museum at Groote Schuur Hospital. Prof Brink hosted the members and was responsible for a truly memorable evening.
The main focus for 2016 will be the 17th annual SA Heart Congress. Planning for this meeting is on track and it promises to be a world class event.

*Prof Anton Doubell, President, Western Cape Branch*