

SASOHN VISION

... To continue to be a recognized leading professional practice society that promotes the occupational health nurse practitioner and the advances for both national and international standards in occupational health, in order to improve and sustain the quality of occupational health services ...



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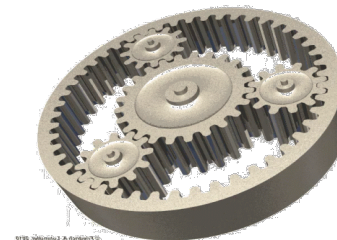
SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
NURSING PRACTITIONERS
Registered Public Benefit Organisation (Reg 6571079153)

NIOH COVID-19 Centenary Webinar

“SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19: Strengthening Occupational Health resilience for national emergency epidemic responses for South African workplaces”

THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Presenter : Ms. Denise Minnie
Immediate Past President SASOHN
denise.minnie1@gmail.com



SASOHN VALUES

Professionalism

Professional approach in all our business dealings and interpersonal relationships

Respect

Respect each other and value diversity

Integrity

Trust, honesty and ethical approach in everything we do

Delivery

Results driven culture through constructive feedback and continuous improvement

Excellence

Efficiency in the way we deliver our service

ABOUT SASOHN

During the Pandemic



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- ❖ Developing the OHNP: SASOHN members deeply appreciate the NIOH Training Division for the prompt, ongoing weekly Zoom webinars. This ongoing professional development opportunity has been embraced by members as a 'life-line' to latest knowledge they can apply to practice
- ❖ 2020 was the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife” – WHO, extended to 2021
- ❖ 2020 - Milestone for the SASOHN – 40 years



IMPACT ON THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONER



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❖ **Increased workload**

OHNP's worked longer shifts, over weekends, through the nights addressing concerns, questions, COVID 19 results, offering health education, do's and don'ts (OHNP's work independently and most often there is only one OHNP at the workplace)

❖ **Challenges in PPE Control level of Prevention**

Lack of standardised PPE; questionable quality of PPE for OHNP's at various workplaces; non-availability at times resulted in unacceptable increase of exposure to a biological hazard level 3 virus.

❖ **Job Loss and Insecurity**

Occupational Health Services (OHS) are still generally not accepted by most companies as essential in comparison to how safety is perceived. Despite members extending themselves, the first departments/ services to be restructured or discontinued completely has been the OHS for most companies. About 20% of SASOHN members have lost their jobs and majority face insecurity as businesses try to recover during the ongoing economic strain.



IMPACT ON THE EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEES



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❖ Lack of knowledge- management of health related

Those that were fortunate had access to an onsite Occupational Health Service and relied on the OHNP for information such as screening, disinfection of office spaces and the development of the prevention programs to reduce the spread of the virus, according our members. What about the gaps created for / by the SMMEs...

- The ratio of one OHNP to many employees was a concern especially if off sick as these clinics were then closed during that period.

❖ Completion / Management of documentation

- ❖ Some employers were unsure of what information had to be collected and/or the responsible person that had to complete the document until Covid Compliance Officers got appointed.
- ❖ Confidential information such as comorbidities disclosed to non medical
- ❖ personnel who lacked understanding of what was expected.



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❖ **Disbelief – COVID 19 Pandemic and vaccinations**

OHNP's persevere in reasoning and explaining the above.

❖ **COVID Case Management**

COVID submissions became an issue for some members as their employers felt employees could have contracted the virus from any one or place, and not necessarily from the workplace.

❖ **COVID 19 Guidelines / policies**

- ❖ Members report that although they ensured documents were distributed to the management, it was apparent that the documents were not read by many and/or not filtering down to employees.
- ❖ Some recommendations were difficult to reasonably be able to comply by the Employer.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING OR PANDEMICS



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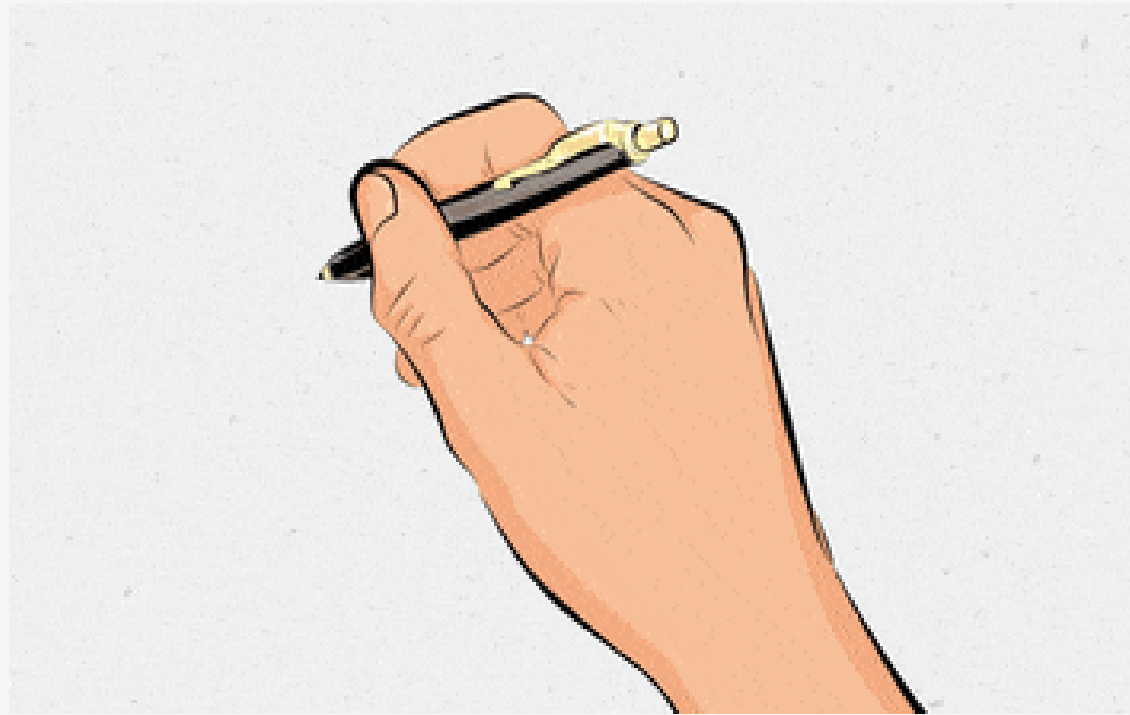
- ❖ SASOHN must be included in discussions/ initiatives that involve the workplace and health and safety policies, code of good practice etc. We have the knowledge and expertise of the workplace and occupational health. During the pandemic nurses were needed and generously assisted with information and implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to participate at stakeholder forum meetings and with the relevant structures.
- ❖ Policies AND procedures regarding the mental health and wellbeing of HCW need to be addressed and prioritised as a matter of urgency.
- ❖ Prioritise health in legislative frameworks, and create an annexure for high risk occupations and vulnerable groups at the workplace, especially nurses.
- ❖ There is a shortage nurses in the foreseeable future. The training of nurses in advanced disciplines need to be prioritised including the ratio of OHNP to number of employees.
- ❖ Telehealth Consultations were initiated by the OHNP's during the pandemic but should now become part of the norm. This reduces exposure but also allows for flexible working hours and rest periods.



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**NIOH Training Department for the CoVid Series since 2020
SASOHN Members for their input & feedback**

SASOHN NATIONAL OFFICE

www.sasohn.co.za



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❖ **SASOHN PRESIDENT**

MICHELLE BESTER

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❖ **OFFICE MANAGER**

08:00 -13:00

ADELE DUMAS

office@sasohn.co.za

❖ **AUDIOMETRY REGISTRAR**

14:00 – 16:00

GITTA BIRK

audio@sasohn.co.za

❖ **ADDRESS (Make appointment, working on hybrid approach)**

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