

President's report AGM October 2021

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be addressing you in person this year.

My report tonight includes that of the Project Manager, Garth Brink's as well. As he quotes from Lewis Carroll *'The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things: of shoes and ships - and sealing wax - of cabbages and kings'* and indeed it has.

Everyone thought that 2020 was an extremely difficult year, with many activities and events being cancelled or postponed and we all looked forward to 2021 when everything would return to "normal." For this reason, in many ways, 2021 has been an even more difficult year, as we have come to realise that this pandemic is not going to be over soon and we most likely will have to adapt to the "new normal" as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc.

I am delighted to report though, that SASTM was still able to hold the Travel Medicine Course, at a new venue, the Southern Sun Rosebank Hotel, combining students who had registered for the 2020 course with those who registered for the 2021 course. A one day Update was held in March as a live event and was enthusiastically attended. Very excitingly, our much anticipated conference that was to celebrate our 20th Anniversary last year, is currently taking place.

We have had to adapt to the necessary requirements due to the various lockdown levels but have managed as best we can, by doing all our executive committee meetings virtually, and limiting the number of people who are able to attend the live events.

Instead of having a conference every two years, we propose that we have a conference every fourth year and updates during the other years. The updates could alternate between Gauteng, Cape Town and Durban and would have a format such as arriving midmorning on a Saturday and staying over and having some talks on Sunday morning and leaving before lunch, or something similar. The next conference would need to be after three years to get us back in line so that we don't have a conference in the same year as the ISTM.

I would like to report back on some matters that arose from the previous Annual General Meeting.

Society name change

In 2012 a decision was made to change the name of the Society from South African Society of Travel Medicine to Southern African Society of Travel Medicine. The relevant documents were submitted online to the Department of Social Development. In spite of numerous correspondence there was no progress. Other avenues were then explored this year but the SASTM name change was eventually rejected by the Department of Social Development. A decision was then made to retain the original name.

Update from Department of Health

Subsequent to our meeting in October 2020, we submitted a proposal as requested, for annual CPD requirements, which will be incorporated into a five-year renewal requirement. The following proposal was submitted in December, but there has been no response from Department of health:

ANNUAL CPD

Yellow fever licence holders should provide evidence of two general Travel Medicine CPD points and one ethics Travel Medicine CPD point annually. SASTM will ensure that there are sufficient journal clubs or like meetings to achieve these. They will be offered free of charge to SASTM members and other non-members will pay a nominal fee.

Failure to comply with the above requirements will result in the yellow fever licence being cancelled. Defaulters will be given a three month grace period in which to provide proof.

CPD LINKED TO RENEWAL OF YELLOW FEVER LICENCE EVERY FIVE YEARS

Applicants for renewal of the yellow fever licence will be required to provide proof of having attended or participated in any of the following within the last five years:

- *The SASTM refresher course that is linked to the annual Travel Medicine Course*
- *A SASTM Travel Medicine Congress*
- *A Congress or Regional Congress of the International Society of Travel Medicine*
- *A Congress of any other travel medicine Society with prior approval by SASTM*
- *A congress of any other society that has relevance to travel medicine with prior approval by SASTM*

Or

Have accumulated a total of 10 general and 5 ethics Travel Medicine CPD points over the preceding 5 years.

*Failure to comply with the above requirements will result in the yellow fever licence holder **NOT** being eligible for renewal of the Yellow Fever Licence. Defaulters will be given a six month grace period in which to provide proof.*

The on-line licence renewal system is going ahead and it was anticipated that it would be functional by March 2021. However due to challenges regarding moving into new offices, the system is not yet functional. This system will incorporate CPD requirements for yellow fever licence renewal purposes. Dr Bhembe stipulated that SASTM Membership cannot be enforced and the Department of Health would not make this a requirement for licence renewal.

They are now accepting email applications for new and renewals of yellow fever licences at the following email address: ndohpermits@health.gov.za.

The Pan African Travel Medicine Federation

Following the Launch in October 2020, 12 countries were approached to form Groups. There have been some responses to date with up to ten participants per Group.

The Inaugural Board meeting was held on 31 March 2021.

The term of office for the current committee was meant to be until October 2021 when the AGM was meant to be held at the PATMC . It will now be held virtually.

The Federation has representation from the following countries: Angola, DRC, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

The Federation has developed their website www.patmf.org and registration of the Federation in South Africa has commenced.

Tullia Marcolongo will be writing an editorial about the PATMF for the Journal of Travel Medicine.

The Federation approached Travax independently due to SASTM being unable to carry the extra cost of having the PATMF members utilising SASTM's account with Travax and negotiations with Travax are still ongoing.

A working group has been formed to plan the strategic framework for the Federation. The group consists of: Yetunde Fadipe, Paul Yonga, Garth Brink and Tullia Marcolongo

SASTM needs to be a meaningful role player in the activities of the Federation. It is the most powerful Society within the Federation and has resources that could be provided to the Federation. Recordings of Update presentations as well as selected Travel Medicine Course presentations could be made available, at a cost to all PATMF members.

SASTM is represented by Max Winkler, our new president, on the PATMC Board and Executive and this can result in an excellent working relationship with the Federation.

IAMAT

SASTM continues to administer two scholarships provided by IAMAT, which results in additional income for the Society. Grants this year were awarded to Dr Gordon Amoh – Ghana and Dr Shaban Walaa – Egypt but his scholarship has been Deferred to 2022 as he was unable to travel to South Africa in May. Mr Jackson Mutisya – Kenya was the 2020 student.

Wits

The annual Memorandum of Agreement meeting was held via Zoom with the University on 07 July 2021.

Feedback was given regarding the Travel Medicine Course.

Nicola Christofides discussed the way forward for the Wits on-line system. The Travel Medicine Course has been listed on the Ulwazi system.

Angie Zwane confirmed that they will be moving their on-line platform to the Student Information System (SIMS) and this should be operational by 2022. Course students would need to be registered on the system.

Gill Nelson discussed the renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement which expired January 2021. The memorandum was circulated for comments / changes with the intention of the new agreement being in place by end August 2021. Gill and Nicola were confident this Memorandum will be renewed for a further five years.

The International Society of Travel Medicine

Two Executive members, Lee Baker and Albie de Frey, serve on professional and interest groups within the ISTM. Salim Parker is the Africa member of the ISTM Liaison Committee and thus a presence of SASTM within the ISTM continues. The value of this is evident by the presence of Lin Chen, immediate Past president, at the Skukuza Conference.

Travel Medicine Course 2021

This course was first given in the year 2000 and it became the first course accredited by the South African Department of Health for training required for registration of yellow fever vaccination centres.

The course convenors were: Prof Mary Ross, Prof Peter Leggat, Dr David Durrheim, Dr Albie de Frey and Dr Lucille Blumberg, and it is heartening to see that most of them are still involved to this day!

The 2021 course was held from the 5 - 9 May at the Southern Sun Rosebank hotel as Bytes no longer do external conferences. The hotel went to great lengths to accommodate the Course and ensure control of COVID-19 regulations, and I am very grateful to them.

Combining applications for 2020 and 2021, 137 were approved in total. There were 97 attendees, with 25 no shows and 15 deferred to 2022.

The following countries were represented:

Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa.

Sanofi provided a grant for sponsoring students and for course material, for which SASTM is very grateful.

58 Students passed the Course, 37 Students failed the Course and 02 Students did not hand in Projects.

Best student for the 2020/2021 Travel medicine Course is Dr Greffrath, who was offered free registration to the conference, but was unable to take this offer up.

My thanks go to all the presenters at the course, and especially to Albie de Frey and Marion Blewett for arranging this successful course under very difficult circumstances.

The dates for next year's Course are from 4 – 8 May 2022 and it will once again be held at the Southern Sun Rosebank hotel.

The Travel Medicine Receptionist Workshop;

This was a new initiative this year and was held the day before the course, at the same venue. It was very well received and successful and another one, with more delegates, will be held on the 3 May 2022.

The Pan African Travel Medicine Conference

Against all odds, this conference has gone ahead. A decision to finally go ahead with the conference was only made at the end of July, as the third COVID wave continued to linger and the looting and riots in July were definite deterrents. The determination and hard work of the executive, but especially Albie de Frey and Marion Blewett, has paid dividends resulting in what will be a memorable Conference. Many challenges arose and had to be overcome, the greatest being the limitation of travel on account of the current pandemic. The organising and compiling of a phenomenal scientific programme in the short time period is to be lauded.

Whereas it is somewhat disappointing that delegate numbers are not what one would have hoped for, SASTM has been fortunate to obtain three grants that will help offset the low delegate numbers and thus reduce the financial burden. These are grants from the South African National Convention Bureau, Mpumalanga Tourism and Convention Bureau and an educational grant from Pro Anima Stiftung (through Albie de Frey) for the Inhumanity plenary session. SASTM is extremely grateful for these.

I would also like to acknowledge the work that Turners Conferences has done in the background assisting with the tax clearance certificate and registration with the Central Supplier Database which is a prerequisite in obtaining a grant from a government institution.

Travel Clinic Participation in the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

After much ado regarding the poor performance by the government to procure vaccines, the vaccines eventually arrived in the country and then plans had to be made to administer them.

Communication was sent to SASTM members on 05 February regarding information from Business for SA (B4SA) pertaining to the vaccine roll out. Forty one travel clinics responded that they met the criteria and would be interested in participating in the vaccine roll out.

Albie de Frey contacted Business for SA, indicating that the Travel Clinics wanted to get involved with the vaccine roll out and enquired what the next steps would be. He followed up with Dr Simon Strachan from B4SA to see if he had any updated information for the Travel Clinics who wish to be registered. He discovered that members would have to register as GP Practices on the EVDS, not as Travel Clinics.

SASTM submitted a letter to Dr Leslie Bamford, National Department of Health, indicating the role that the Travel Clinics could play in the roll out. No response was received.

To date, there is still no way that a Travel Clinic can register on the EVDS and administer vaccines.

Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI act)

SASTM needs to follow the processes as laid out by the South African Government to be compliant.

Both websites, SASTM and SANHNET are POPIA compliant.

We have been unable to register the Society's Information Officer as the system cannot register the same person twice and I am already registered for my company. We have been given until February 2022 to do so, by which time the system should be corrected. As Max Winkler is the incoming President, he can be designated as Information Officer.

Marion Blewett will be the Deputy Information Officer.

· A POPI Compliance Manual will need to be formulated.

Both Marion and I attended numerous webinars on POPIA in order to familiarise ourselves with the obligations.

Complaints:

There was a formal complaint laid against one of SASTM's members regarding unprofessional conduct. The member was given right of reply and was warned that SASTM does not condone behaviour that is unprofessional and has the right to refuse membership to those who do not conduct themselves professionally. The complainant was referred to the HPCSA.

Some of the members complained about the service that they receive from DSV. This was reported to Sanofi, and will hopefully improve.

What does SASTM do for its members?

Besides all that has been mentioned above, we have the faithful long-standing services. SASTM is profoundly visible to its members through the various benefits that are provided.

Newsletters

We have had three newsletters this year, in February, July and September, and are due to publish one in November and one in December. These newsletters have kept members up to date with the on-going ever-changing situation regarding COVID-19 and vaccines. My thanks go to the contributors for the interesting articles.

Travax

This invaluable reference source is offered free to all paid up members.

SanthNet and VERS

Once again, I urge all SASTM members to use VERS in their clinics, as this is an extremely useful tool which will allow us to collect important data regarding travellers and their vaccination and malaria prophylaxis status. The data on yellow fever vaccines is required annually by the DOH, so this is a

simple way of collating the information. The website has undergone some changes and the VERS has been moved to its own platform. No reports have been generated this year due to the lack of travel.

Newsflashes and Listserv

Thanks to Marion, we are all kept up to date with the latest outbreaks, and through the Listserv we benefit from our colleagues' experience, often discovering that travel medicine is not an exact science!

Due to the constant change in recommendations and travel restrictions, these newsflashes have become even more useful.

Publications

There have been no new publications this year and two of the available ones need to be updated – *Beyond Childhood Vaccination* and *The older Traveller – a Guide for the Health Practitioner*, and it is hoped that this will be done in 2022.

Audit tool

This is still available to any member who wants to know whether they are meeting the requirements for a travel clinic of excellence.

Availability of products

Hepatitis A vaccines. Previously there was a shortage of hepatitis A vaccines. SASTM had several meetings with the manufacturers – whether this made a difference or not, is not really known, but the good thing is that there is stock available now.

Mefloquine Forrester Pharma been able to source Mefloquine on Section 21. Cipla no longer market it here in South Africa.

Telegram

The posting of information on *Telegram* has been interesting to follow and does provide another medium of disseminating information and encouraging member engagement.

Financial situation

Income generating opportunities all but dwindled during 2020 and 2021, and the support that we have previously enjoyed from the Pharmaceutical Industry has all but disappeared, and this has resulted in SASTM currently experiencing financial strain and changes needed to be made. However, through the hard work of the Executive, SASTM has remained a viable and strong Society. Through wise investment of funds, SASTM is able to continue its operations. New methods of generating income must be put in place so as to avoid a similar occurrence.

In the new year, the Executive Committee will look at projects to increase income. These will include the Travel Medicine Receptionists' Workshop and Updates. Providing recordings of selected Travel Medicine Course and Conference presentations that can be viewed, at a fee, could create opportunities to increase income. These recorded presentations could be made available to members of the Pan African Travel Medicine Federation and thus expand the potential base of those who would wish to access the recordings

THE SOCIETY

We have 480 paid up members currently, almost 80% of which are medical practitioners. The majority come from Gauteng, and 22 are from other countries. That we have managed to maintain the number of members through these difficult times is truly commendable and can be attributed largely to Marion and the relationship that she has with our members.

The Executive Committee will have held four meetings this year (the last one in November). They have all been virtual meetings, which has helped with our financial situation, but it is hoped that at least one will be held face to face in 2022.

We have two new members of the executive. Dr Steven Miller and Mrs Lynda Steyn were elected unopposed. They have replaced Sr Sue Kelly who stepped down and Dr Judy Hoare who has become ex officio as the secretary/treasurer. I thank Sue for her valuable input over the past few years and welcome Steve and Lynda.

Our executive committee for the next three years is as follows:

Max Winkler	President
Lee Baker	Immediate past president
Judy Hoare	Treasurer/secretary
Salim Parker	ISTM liaison officer
Albi de Frey	WITS Liaison officer
Steven Miller	Member
Rochelle Lee	Member
Lynda Steyn	Member
Madelein Dercksen	Member

A President elect is still to be elected.

As has been mentioned before, SASTM is celebrating 21 years of existence and incredibly, and we still have a few founding exco members, specifically Prof Mary Ross, Peter Leggatt, and Albie de Frey. Very sadly we recently lost a founding member, Monika Hodge who was a very enthusiastic and active member. As a tribute to Monika, I asked Mary Ross for her memories of Monika. She mentioned that generosity and concern for others were Monika's trademarks along with a fantastic sense of humour. Meeting up with Albie in Acapulco and then again in 1997 in Geneva was the start of their collaboration in getting the travel medicine course and SASTM launched. Many other exciting international trips to China, Singapore, Liverpool, Montreal all evoke memories of Monika taking charge of difficult situations as only a theatre matron could do so well. And nobody who was there can forget the 2004 conference in Cape Town with the wonderful reception at Vergelegen that Monika organised for SASTM. I remember her as someone larger than life. May she rest in peace.

In recognition of these founding exco members' tireless efforts and sincerity in promoting all that we do at SASTM, we would like to thank them for inspiring, encouraging and challenging us, and would like to extend honorary membership to Albie de Frey, Mary Ross and Peter Legatt. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Mary and Peter could not be here tonight but Albie is and we as him to come up and accept his certificate. We will post the others.

I now come to the sad part of the evening: Saying farewell to our Project manager. No accolade or words of praise would be adequate to convey our gratitude to Garth for his dedication and commitment to SASTM for the past 17 years. He worked tirelessly to ensure that SASTM is a successful Society that is sustainable and endeavours to meet the needs of all its members. He will be sadly missed, but his legacy remains and SASTM will do its best to uphold the integrity and values that he has instilled in the society. We have also extended honorary membership to Garth in honour of his dedication to SASTM.

As I come to the end of my term as President, I would like to thank each of you for your support and guidance. I cannot begin to tell you how much I have learnt in these past five years and how I have

grown as a person. I have met and worked with wonderful people, been challenged to the Nth degree and had many good times. The past two years have been particularly challenging and SASTM has only survived because the Executive Committee has worked together and supported each other.

At school, my worst subject was English and I really loathed having to write letters and articles, but, after all the president's logs and reports, and with tremendous guidance from Garth, I have come to rather enjoy them!

I wish Max Winkler and the new executive committee all the best. It is going to be a new era with the financial challenges and having to move forward without Garth's guidance, but having younger members brings new ideas and ways of working and I am sure it will be an exciting and successful time.

Finally, my grateful thanks to Marion, she is a rock and is always willing to assist. The smooth running of the Society is thanks to her. SASTM is very fortunate to have her as the face of SASTM, as I am sure the members can attest to.

Thank you.