

SEMDSA Congress 2004 — a word from the Organising Committee



The SEMDSA Congress, to be held on the Durban beachfront at the end of March 2004, promises to be an inspiring mix of international expertise and local input. The international expertise comes in the able forms of Professors Graham Hitman, William Young, Steven Kahn and Roy Homburg, each a leading authority in their own area of interest. Graham Hitman will provide insight into the complex genetics of type 2 diabetes and review the ever-present problem of cardiovascular disease in type 2 diabetes. This theme will be extended with a focus on dyslipidaemia, by Professor John Reckless, as part of the LASSA overlap session. The SEMDSA 2004 committee has supported the 'Proudly South African' initiative in successfully luring Steven Kahn all the way from Seattle, to share his knowledge of the Diabetes Prevention Programme and give an update on the dysfunctional beta cell. Endocrine hypertension is the main theme to be addressed by William Young, and those who have heard him lecture at the Boston Endocrine Update assure us that we have managed a real coup in enticing him to Durban. As many practising physicians, gynaecologists and endocrinologists will probably agree, the polycystic ovary syndrome is a problem of ever-increasing proportion, and SEMDSA is fortunate to have been able to secure the expertise of Roy Homburg in addressing the pathogenesis and management of this heterogeneous entity. The diabetic foot is to be given air-time at the Congress and we will hear from Professor Paul Rheeder on the progress made by the Diabetic Foot Action Group. In addition, a practising surgeon from KwaZulu-Natal with a special interest in the diabetic foot, Uvan Naidoo, will provide an update on the management of this important complication of diabetes.

The Organising Committee applauds the contribution to the programme made by the SEMDSA members, who conduct research in trying, impecunious and often frustrating circumstances, frequently mixed with heavy clinical and teaching loads; it is hoped that the Congress will provide inspiration for new studies and motivation to continue striving for a better understanding of diabetes and endocrine disorders in South Africa. It is hoped that the same will hold true for the DESSA sessions, as efforts in reducing the level of

ignorance are key to effective management strategies. Ngoni Chigwana, a Zimbabwean who is well aware of the challenges of managing diabetes in Africa, will speak at DESSA and provide practical guidelines and innovative ideas in transmitting diabetes education.

Lest the delegates view this array of knowledge with some concern that it will be all work and no play, they may be assured of a vibrant social programme, including the welcome cocktail party, a Moroccan theme evening, and the annual banquet, all kindly sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. As always, we are indebted to the industry for financial support, not only in sponsoring social events but also in assisting with sponsorship of delegates and international experts and providing awards. The congress would not be sustainable without this support and, particularly in the current era, it is greatly appreciated.

Shelley Harris, as always, has been the mainstay of the organisation of the Congress and has our gratitude for making it all seem so easy.

The official Journal of our Society, *JEMDSA*, has been reinvigorated by design changes through close co-operation with the SAMA publishing team, and will sport its new look for the first time at the Congress. The scientific editors will also be addressing editorial content more vigorously, and we trust that SEMDSA members will enjoy and benefit from our constant striving for improvement.

We look forward to welcoming both South Africans and Africans from other countries on the continent, as well as extending a warm greeting to our international experts. The organising committee wishes all delegates a rewarding, enlightening and enjoyable 2004 SEMDSA Congress.

Fraser Pirie

*On behalf of the Organising Committee
SEMDSA Congress 2004*