

Editor's Note



It has been nearly two years since RAPSA (Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Society of South Africa) was formalised into a properly constituted society in Durban in November 2004. I have had the privilege of serving as the chairman for these first two years.

This year, 2006, on the weekend on 25-26 November we are holding the first RAPSA annual congress since the formation of the society, making this yet another milestone in the history of RAPSA. Last year there was not an annual meeting due to the fact that ESRA (European Society of Regional Anaesthesia) held a regional anaesthesia and pain control meeting in Cape Town. The executive of RAPSA deemed it wise to not hold a local meeting at more or less the same time. It might have lead to smaller attendance figures for the local meeting. As it turns out maybe we could have had the local meeting as, for various reasons, the local delegate attendance at the ESRA meeting was not overwhelming to put it mildly.

ONE of the reasons for that was possibly the pricing structure made necessary by the chosen venue, making it not very attractive to local delegates in spite of a special reduced rate for local delegates and members of RAPSA. For this reason we are striving to make this year's RAPSA meeting value for money. Lynette Bester and myself are responsible for the organisation of the meeting for 2006. Lynette is doing the logistic organising and I have organised the scientific content of the meeting.

How have we tried to make the meeting value for money?

Firstly the venue. The Volkswagen Conference Center (VWCC) is situated in Midrand. This is very convenient for

local delegates from both Pretoria and Johannesburg who will then not have to book accommodation (unless, of course, they want to!). The majority of attendees will be local, simply because the greatest concentration is here in Gauteng, making it cost effective for the majority of the delegates.

I am pleased, however, with the number of "non-local" delegates who have registered. From as far afield as Australia, New Zealand the USA, not to mention Pholokwane, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Cape Town. Unfortunately these delegates will have to make us of accommodation and Lynette has arranged some excellent accommodation, close by to the VWCC at special rates. So, while the out-of-towners will be more out of pocket for the meeting than the locals, we are confident that they will get value for money from start to finish.

Secondly the scientific content. To make the meeting value for money and cost effective for delegates, there MUST be something for them to take home with them that they can use, practically, in their practices. I have endeavoured to arrange a scientific programme that will do just that. I have an emphasis on the practical and there will be something for everyone to take home. I am looking forward to some of the lectures personally as they will be addressing some practical problems I experience in my own practice, so sitting at the feet of the masters will help make my practice so much better.

Our format differs a little to the usual. On certain topics we have a lecture in the plenary sessions and then later on, either the same day or on Sunday, we have a practical hands-on workshop on the same topic. In some cases the same person presents the lecture and workshop, but in other topics someone else will present the workshops,

giving other views and perspective on the topic. Always the emphasis is on practical tips and know-how and you will take something home that you can use.

For such a small meeting, our speaker list boasts no less than three international speakers. William Harrop Griffiths from St Mary's hospital in London is, I think, one of the most entertaining speakers in anaesthesia and we are lucky to have him coming for our meeting. Prof Narinda Rawal is professor and head of the department in Orebro in Sweden. He is an extremely well known speaker and figure in the anaesthesia world in Europe. He knows South Africa well and has been here a couple of time already. He was, in fact, the organiser of the ESRA meeting in Cape Town last year. He does anaesthetised pig workshops in his department now as well and I had the privilege of being invited to Sweden last year December to help with the first one and will be going again this December. He, being a great man, is quite happy to acknowledge to the whole world that the anaesthetized pig workshops were originally a South African innovation.

Then we have Dr Graham Howarth. He is coming to address a topic which I feel it is becoming imperative that we address in South Africa and that is the matter of informed consent for regional anaesthesia. So, as he works for Medical Protection Society in the UK, he is well equipped to address this issue and we will learn a few things that we will have to do in this regard to get our own house in order. We are doubly privileged in that the financial costs of his trip are being totally sponsored by the MPS - a double whammy - we have him to talk to us and we have it for free!!

In addition to these great men we have the usual high quality local speakers and then also some new, young blood who will be the next generation of teachers in South Africa. They are young and fired up and extremely enthusiastic, and one can, at the very least, be inspired by their enthusiasm.

The Trade. What would we do without them? One cannot even begin to imagine what a meeting like this would cost each delegate were it not for the trade. Thanks to the trade this meeting and all our other meetings are value for money and cost-effective for the amount of money that comes out of each individual's pocket. They are so supportive!

Then lastly, with reference to the previous paragraph, the meeting is value for money because of what it costs. In the greater scheme of things, the information these people will deliver is by far worth the registration fee – especially due to the fact that the trade support makes it possible to keep the registration fees so low.

So while the meeting is not for free or even 'cheap' it will definitely be value for money.

In this issue of SAJRA we have the complete scientific programme as well as information on how to register, as well as the website address etc. Please look for this information inside the journal and if you have any problems, do not hesitate to contact either myself on 082 552 8088 or Lynette Bester on 083 656 3639 or lynette.bester@up.ac.za.

It is our sincere hope that the RAPSA meeting will go a long, long way to keeping the standard of regional anaesthesia high and taking it, in South Africa, to even greater heights, and stimulating even more interest and encouraging even more people to do it and become involved and we hope to see you all there.

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