



# PSSA Young Pharmacists' Group

Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa



## Essential vs non-essential staff

Hilton Tommy Stevens  
PSSA YPG PRO

Young pharmacists in South Africa are represented throughout the different demographics of the country. As a result, it is not uncommon for ideas and perceptions to differ. Our response to questions and challenges in our profession spread across the entire spectrum of possibilities. To voice an opinion that captures the sentiment of a group is therefore challenging, however I can confidently state that the following is the opposite.

At the beginning of the year, when we were counting down the seconds to 2020 and going over our personal goals of the new year, I doubt anyone made provision for something that would question and test almost every sector, and industry across the globe, which would eventually reshape cultures and behaviours across all mediums. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us into changing our approach to solving problems, finding different tools to perform operations, and shift priorities too. It has also forced many pharmacists into leaving their safe home, to occupy a risky space at work, and returning with risk back home. Some silently question whether the Pharmacists Oath is motivation enough, and whether our pure intention is enough to substitute the lack of much needed validation from the public, corporate and government. The validation would assist and support our roles as essential workers.

"Give them their flowers" is a new urban phrase that is used when validation is owed. Some South African businesses have been giving doctors, nurses, policeman, and the military *their* flowers through products, discounts and special rates, to mention a few. Their role? Being essential workers. Even though as pharmacists we share the essential worker designation, we may not necessarily find ourselves with a share in the *flowers*.

Dr Linda Sapadin, psychologist and success coach, once wrote on *The importance of validation*. In her article, she mentions that on the final episode of Oprah's TV show she highlighted the importance of validation and quoted, "I've talked to nearly 30 000 people on this show," she said, "and all 30 000 had one thing in common. They all wanted validation."

There is no doubt that the work and services provided by pharmacists in all sectors largely impact all households, more so during these COVID-19 times. We get the validation, even if they don't say it, from the patients we interact with. We see it in the potential of the research we commit to, and the products we produce and distribute. One can however never have enough validation from work done or achieved, so to ensure that we try, it's recommended that we don't forget to frequently give each other the *flowers* we deserve.

Here are a few sites to help stay current with the latest guidelines from reputable institutes and sites:

1. World Health Organization (WHO) COVID-19 site:  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>  
 Twitter handle: @WHO
2. National Institute for Communicable Disease( NCID):  
<https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/>  
 Twitter handle: @nicd\_sa

3. South African Government's page of COVID-19 info:  
<https://www.gov.za/Coronavirus>  
 Twitter handle: @governmentZA
4. FIP Covid-19 Information Hub:  
<https://www.fip.org/coronavirus>  
 Twitter handle: @FIP\_org

Podcasts such as those posted by the South African Medical Research Council ([samrc.ac.za/media/podcast](http://samrc.ac.za/media/podcast)) amongst others, are also a good way of keeping up with the latest information and interviews with specialists.

### Young Pharmacists @ Work:



*A few of the Young Pharmacists in attendance at the 2020 SAAHIP conference*



*YPG Chair Matlapeng Mshengu sharing some light about the YPG*

The month of March saw SAAHIP host a successful conference themed *Left right, left right*, focusing on a range of themes including the NHI, COVID-19 but also featured numerous Young Pharmacists presenting current innovative research and tools that can be used in the hospital sector to advance the practice. YPG Chair, Matlapeng Shabalala Mshengu, had the opportunity to speak on the role and objectives of the YPG. We have no doubt that SAAHIP will continue to give the Young Pharmacists' Group such platforms and groom future leaders.

## Branch activities

The month of March built momentum as far as YPG activities were concerned. One of these was an initiative by the Pretoria Branch, which saw Projects Coordinator Byron Chukwu attending an SAPC workshop for interns. He stressed the importance of timely completion of CPDs and invited all interns to the annual intern workshops hosted by YPG PSSA Pretoria.

## We want...WE NEEDED YOUR PARTICIPATION

In order for us to understand what you would like to watch, read or do as social projects and campaigns. Please feel free to drop us an email, Facebook message or even just interact by searching *PSSA YPG*.



*Projects Coordinator Byron Chukwu speaking at the SAPC workshop for interns*

Find out from your PSSA branch how you can get involved – they look forward to welcoming and mentoring you.

***Stay safe!***