



Only dead fish go with the flow!

Joggie Hattingh

PSSA President

This cliché tends to make people smile at first! It is rather quirky and oh-so-true. The secondary emotion that is evoked is one of dread; what does it say about me? Could I be counted under the “dead fish” in the pharmacy community, who simply accepts what is thrown my way?

Our profession faces so many challenges, and we have to continually respond to new challenges, such as annual fees that are totally out of line with inflation, whilst our own income diminishes in real terms and then the increase in dispensing fee being totally out of sync with the actual cost of dispensing (and has been for some years!) and the latest proposed new fee for the approval for destruction of S6 medicines is also put on the table.

Do you accept this with a shrug of the shoulder, or do you complain vehemently, but actually support it with your inaction?

We, fortunately, have wonderful staff at the PSSA Head Office who respond to all these challenges! They do so in a professional manner, with statistical data as proof of argument and with legal opinions where and when required. This is great for the profession, but unfortunately, there is hardly ever input from the “man in the street”, or shall we say, “the pharmacist on the corner”.

Some of the issues, such as dispensing fees and annual fees are not new, but as CJ Lewis said: “You can’t go back to the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending”.

I have not seen the robust discussions required in this regard on social media. In fact, I have not seen anything in any media other than comments from PSSA and ICPA.

We do have some strong Branches and Sectors in the PSSA, with many pharmacists contributing from the heart. Allow me to quote the late Nelson Mandela: “There can be no greater gift than that of giving one’s time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return”. These are true words indeed, but the willing can only continue for so long without the support of their colleagues.

My appeal to each and every pharmacist is to support their local branch and sector. Start reading the PSSA Newsletters and comment on what you read. Take the matters where we get no resolutions from Government or statutory bodies to social media platforms and discuss it in a professional way. We need not attack Government or any organ of state, but we can comment on the wrongs inflicted on our profession in a robust and open discussion.

It is time to start swimming, unless we want to end downstream with the rest of the dead fish!