

## **Epilepsy Society of South Africa**

### 2021-2022 Report

#### **CHAPTER OFFICERS**

Prof. Gail Scher, Chair

Dr. Rajeshree Govender, Secretary

Dr. Ansuya Naidoo, Treasurer

*Officer Election Date: 2019*



#### **ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Our chapter membership increased to 113 members.
- Paediatric Epilepsy Training (PET) courses: (initiative of the British Paediatric Neurology Association), Courses in 2022 organized by the South Africa faculty:
  - Cape Town (February 2022) - 51 attendees
  - Mauritius (May 2022) - 11 attendees
  - PET Africa (Hybrid meetings)- Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda
- Affiliated activities
  - The Paediatric Neurology and Developmental Association (PANDA)-national body of paediatric neurologists/ developmentalists. Activities held by PANDA in support of epilepsy training.
  - PANDA Weekend, June 2022 – Kwa-Zulu natal-covered Neurodevelopmental disorders and comorbid epilepsy- 88 attendees.
    - Monthly online webinars by trainees in neurology/neurodevelopment in South Africa. Epilepsy topics covered this year included drug resistant epilepsy in South African children and Dravet Syndrome.
  - The Neurological Association of South Africa (NASA) is a professional body for neurologists in South Africa. Activities held by NASA in support of epilepsy:
    - Annual NASA congress: virtually in May 2022. Epilepsy talks included autoimmune epilepsies in comatose and post-hypoxic patients, Epilepsy Genetics, Standard and New Anti-epileptic Drug Study II SANAD II, EEG. Speakers included Prof Dali Magazi, Fleur van Rootselaar (Netherlands), Tony Marson (UK), Prof Lawrence Tucker.
    - NASA hosts weekly virtual EEG meetings by Dr James Butler.
  - Neurochat Forum hosted by Red Cross Children's Hospital:
    - EEG case-based teaching for trainees in South African/African countries.
    - Multi-disciplinary Epilepsy surgery meetings.
  - EEG online course-by Lawrence Tucker from the University of Cape Town is a training course for registrars/specialists locally and across the continent.
- Our members have contributed as speakers/chairs for ILAE Africa/Mediterranean webinars.

- The Clinical Neurophysiology Society of South Africa (body of professionals working in clinical neurophysiology) held their congress covering topics related to paediatric/adult epilepsy in April 2022 in Gordon's Bay.

### **CHALLENGES FACED IN 2021 AND 2022**

- Access to specialized epilepsy care and investigations including EEG and long-term EEG services remain limited to a few specialized centers.
- We continue to have erratic access to anti-seizure medications especially in the public sector. There are frequent shortages of drugs that are available.
- Epilepsy surgery is limited to centers with expertise.
- PANDA-SA/ Neurological Association of South Africa (NASA) continue to advocate for access to better care for patients with epilepsy in South Africa.

### **RESEARCH AND PUBLISHED ARTICLES IN 2021 AND 2022**

Raga SV, Essajee F, Solomons R, Van Toorn R, Wilmshurst JM. Epileptic spasms: A South African overview of aetiologies, interventions, and outcomes. *Dev Med Child Neurol*. 2022 Oct 13.

### **FUTURE PLANS FOR 2023**

- PET Course in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal – May 2022. Previous cancelled courses in George, Nelspruit and Zambia are still being considered.
- In 2023 ILAE Africa received an IBRO award to run a school in Cape Town. We will do combine a PET course with this school and will have bursary support for attendees from LMIC. The theme will align with the IGAP roll-out.
- South Africa has won the bid to host ICNC (International Child Neurology Conference) 2024 and PANDA is hosting as the local organizing committee. Gail Scher (chair ESSA and PANDA), Jo Wilmshurst (ESSA committee member, chair of ILAE Africa commission, immediate past president ICNA, PANDA exco member, head of ICNC Scientific committee 2024) and Raj Govender (Secretary ESSA and PANDA exco committee member and head of website) are involved in ESSA and ICNC2024.
- PANDA weekend meeting 2023 in Stellenbosch has epilepsy talks in talks in the programme.

*Report submitted by Dr. Rajeshree Govende*