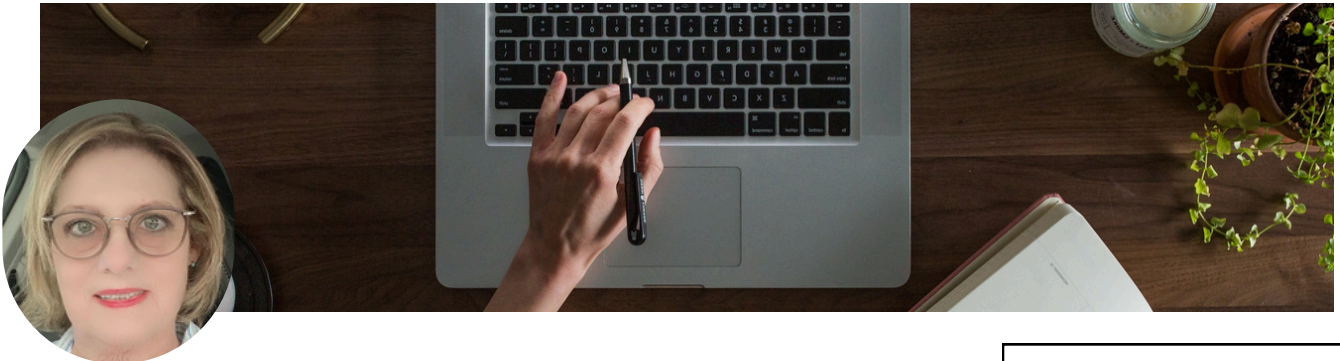


SASOHN Newsletter

May 2025



SASOHN
SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
NURSING PRACTITIONERS
Registered Public Benefit Organisation (Reg no 8571079153)



From the Desk of the President

As we move into the second quarter of 2025, I would like to reflect on two significant events that honour and affirm our role as Occupational Health Nursing Professionals. Occupational Health Nurses are vital to promoting workplace health and safety.

Their expertise in identifying hazards, conducting health assessments, and providing education ensures employees stay healthy and productive. Through preventative care and early intervention, they significantly reduce workplace injuries and illnesses.

First, we celebrate International Nurses Day on 12 May 2025, with the International Council of Nurses (ICN) theme: **"Our Nurses. Our Future. The Economic Power of Care."** This theme highlights nurses' critical role not only in healthcare but in supporting economic sustainability. Occupational Health Nurses, through health screenings, vaccinations, and education on lifestyle changes, help build a healthier, more productive workforce. This year, as we celebrate, let's recognize the unique contributions of Occupational Health Nurses and advocate for policies that promote their development and well-being.

We also observed the World Day for Safety and Health at Work on 28 April 2025, promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This day reminded us of the importance of safe and healthy working conditions for all, including our nurses.

Occupational Health Nurses play a crucial role in implementing health and safety protocols, conducting risk assessments, and ensuring access to protective equipment. By fostering a culture of safety, they help prevent workplace accidents and enhance employee well-being.

As Occupational Health Nurses, it is essential to continue advocating for the rights and safety of our workforce. By promoting a culture of safety and prioritizing employee health and well-being, we contribute to a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future. Let us work together to create workplaces that truly value and support the contributions of Occupational Health Nurses.

"Together, we can ensure a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future for all."

Warm regards

Joan Visser

Shortened

In this newsletter:

From the desk of the President

Celebrating International Nurses Day 2025:
Prioritizing the Wellbeing of Occupational Health Nurses

World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2025:
Embracing Digital Transformation in Occupational Health

Primary healthcare? We don't have time for that

SASOHN KZN Coastal visit to 1ST year Students at DUT

SASOHN West Rand Social Responsibility Report

Western Cape "Bless a Baby" Knitting Project

Mpumalanga Region Kicks Off Q2 with Energized Member Engagement

Something different



Celebrating International Nurses Day 2025: Prioritizing the Wellbeing of Occupational Health Nurses

On 12 May 2025, the global nursing community will unite to celebrate International Nurses Day (IND), commemorating the birth of Florence Nightingale. This year's theme, announced by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), is: **"Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies."** This theme underscores the critical importance of supporting the health and wellbeing of nurses, recognising that a healthy nursing workforce is essential to the functioning of health systems worldwide.

The Role of Occupational Health Nurses

Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) play a pivotal role in maintaining the health and safety of workers across various industries. They are at the forefront of preventing workplace injuries, managing chronic conditions, and promoting overall employee health. Their expertise contributes significantly to reducing absenteeism, enhancing productivity, and fostering a healthier workforce.

Addressing Challenges Faced by OHNs:

Despite their vital contributions, OHNs often encounter challenges such as high workloads, exposure to occupational hazards, and the emotional toll of managing workplace health issues. These factors can impact their physical and mental wellbeing, highlighting the need for systemic support and recognition.

Strategies for Enhancing OHN Wellbeing To align with the IND 2025 theme, the following strategies can be implemented to support OHNs:

- **Safe and Healthy Work Environments:** Ensure that OHNs have access to safe working conditions, appropriate personal protective equipment, and resources to manage workplace hazards effectively.
- **Mental Health Support:** Provide access to mental health resources and support systems to help OHNs cope with the emotional demands of their roles.
- **Professional Development:** Encourage continuous education and training to enhance skills and knowledge, fostering a sense of professional growth and satisfaction.
- **Recognition and Advocacy:** Advocate for the recognition of OHNs' contributions to occupational health and safety, ensuring they receive the respect and support they deserve.

Conclusion

As we observe International Nurses Day 2025, it is imperative to recognise and address the unique challenges faced by Occupational Health Nurses. By prioritising their wellbeing, we not only enhance their ability to provide quality care but also contribute to the overall health and productivity of the workforce. Supporting OHNs is an investment in the future of occupational health and the broader community.

For more information and resources on International Nurses Day 2025, visit the ICN website: [International Nurses Day | ICN - International Council of Nurses](https://www.icn-nurses.org/ind2025)



World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2025: Embracing Digital Transformation in Occupational Health

On April 28, 2025, the global community will observe the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, an initiative led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote a safe and healthy working environment.

This year's theme, "Revolutionizing health and safety: the role of AI and digitalization at work," underscores the transformative impact of technology on occupational health and safety (OHS) practices.

The Digital Shift in Occupational Health

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, robotics, and digital platforms is reshaping the landscape of workplace safety. These technologies offer innovative solutions to traditional challenges, such as:

- **Predictive Analytics:** AI algorithms analyse historical data to forecast potential hazards, enabling proactive risk management.
- **Automation of Hazardous Tasks:** Robots and drones can perform dangerous operations, reducing human exposure to risks.
- **Remote Monitoring:** IoT devices track environmental conditions and worker health metrics in real-time, facilitating immediate interventions.
- **Virtual Training:** Augmented and virtual reality platforms provide immersive safety training experiences, enhancing learning outcomes.

Implications for Occupational Health Nurses:

Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) are at the forefront of implementing these technological advancements. Their role is evolving to encompass:

- **Data Interpretation:** Analyzing health data from wearable devices to identify trends and potential health issues.
- **Technology Integration:** Incorporating digital tools into health surveillance programs to enhance efficiency.

- **Advocacy:** Ensuring that technological implementations prioritize worker wellbeing and comply with ethical standards.

Addressing Emerging Challenges

While digitalization offers numerous benefits, it also presents new challenges:

- **Cybersecurity Risks:** Protecting sensitive health data from breaches.
- **Digital Divide:** Ensuring equitable access to technology across diverse workforces.
- **Workplace Stress:** Managing the impact of constant connectivity and information overload on mental health.

OHNs play a crucial role in mitigating these risks by:

- **Implementing Robust Security Measures:** Collaborating with IT departments to safeguard health data.
- **Promoting Digital Literacy:** Educating workers on the safe use of digital tools and platforms.
- **Supporting Mental Health:** Providing resources and support for employees experiencing digital-related stress.

Conclusion

The 2025 World Day for Safety and Health at Work highlights the pivotal role of digital transformation in enhancing occupational health and safety. By embracing these technological advancements, Occupational Health Nurses can lead the way in creating safer, healthier, and more resilient workplaces. Their expertise ensures that the integration of AI and digital tools aligns with the core values of occupational health: prevention, care, and wellbeing.

For more information and resources on this year's theme, visit the ILO's official page on the World Day for Safety and Health at Work. [International Labour Organization](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/)

By: Joan Visser

Primary healthcare? We don't have time for that!



Ask any occupational health nurse practitioner (OHNP) about primary healthcare (PHC), and you're likely to get a loaded response. It's not that we don't care—it's that "sick consults" often feel like just another frustration we don't have time for. But here's the thing: PHC actually has an important place in our practice of OH.

Think of occupational health assessments as a few big dots outlining a picture..... Remember this analogy for later.

We see our workers once per year and we often schedule our health assessments when pressure on production is lower, meaning that pressure on the workers' health and bodies are lower than during peak production times. If we don't offer PHC, we don't get to observe the effects of workplace risks on their health when it is at its worst, and they are unlikely to remember it months later during a "medical" (often done in a rush).

Ergonomic problems are prime examples of occupational diseases hiding in primary healthcare consultations. Ergonomic surveillance is often described as passive surveillance, referring to a "wait-and-see" approach.

If primary healthcare is not offered, a worker may well visit his/her own healthcare provider for pain due to poor workplace ergonomics and the OHP misses it completely because, during the one encounter per year (the "medical"), the worker's pain is either under control, or not present and the opportunity to

identify the workplace cause is lost.

Or, they are simply not able to make a connection between their hayfever symptoms and the effects of dust or a chemical, or their blue fingers, which comes and goes, and the cold environment they work in. We are supposed to ask these questions during a health assessment but do we? Yes, IF we have an OREP and IF they remember and IF we can communicate with the worker.....??

Furthermore, the COVID pandemic taught us the valuable lesson of recognising health threats early, be it a serious threat such as a new respiratory illness or a simple one such as an outbreak of athlete's foot in the communal showers.

Lastly, unlike occupational health, primary healthcare adds value to a business. We have all heard that occupational health is a "grudge purchase". We are only there because occupational health is mandated by law. So, how do we prove our value? The health and safety of employees should always come first, but let's face it, in the capitalistic world of today there are few things more important than making money.

To a conscientious employer, the value of occupational health is obvious: keep the workforce healthy and they will be productive and make money. Occupational health forms part of that vision. PHC is a value-add that we cannot ignore, as it is easy to motivate. It helps the employer to limit spread of

infections, contain absenteeism due to sick leave and loss of productivity (i.e. it keeps the worker at work) and it tells the employees that the employer cares about their health, unlike occupational health which is often seen as the whip. PHC is an easy way to "sell" OH services, because it makes sense to employers and adds value to their business.

Primary healthcare visits are like smaller dots in-between the big dots (health assessments) forming the picture of a person's health. As the dots become more and more, the outlines of the picture begins to emerge.

Yes, primary care takes time. And yes, it is a thorn in our side. But it actually is a crucial part of the job. If we want to truly support the health of the workforce, we need to see and treat the whole person. And that starts by picking up the crayons, making more dots and connecting it.

By: J. Uys

What are your thoughts?

Share your thoughts on PHC with us by scanning the QR Code below. It is a short questionnaire on PHC. The results will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.



Or click
HERE



SASOHN KZN Coastal visit to 1ST year Students at DUT

Members of SASOHN KZN Coastal Committee visited the 1st year students at DUT for third consecutive year on the 18TH of March 2025. A presentation was done with the students on SASOHN and also shared registration documents for membership with them. One student already a member of SASOHN and finding information on portal very informative on her journey into Occupational Health.

A very interactive group from across KZN hospitals, clinics and Road Accident Fund, most have not worked in an occupational clinic. After members giving feedback on different scenarios in a given day at in a clinic, they were excited to join the world of occupational health. They were invited to attend our meeting and also meet OHNP in KZN.

By: Melanie Pillay



SASOHN West Rand Social Responsibility Report

The West Rand Region chose for their social responsibility project Rahima Moosa Hospital.

The Region decided to collect newborn clothing, to help mothers who do not have clothing to take their newborn babies home in. We had a baby shower on 12 April 2025, and it was a great success. Matron Rose also attended the baby shower and indicated that they have $\pm 13\ 000$ deliveries per year. The hospital caters for the surrounding areas and some of the mothers have financial difficulties providing for these babies especially when they leave the hospital. There are also babies that are abandoned, and the clothing will also help them to feel loved until they get adopted.

Our next outreach will be to the oncology ward at the hospital. The patients on treatment, most of the time, don't have warm attire in hospital. We will ask members of our society, community and churches to help us to collect scarves (even used ones that are still in good condition), warm socks, knee blankets/blankets and bennies to keep them warm while busy with treatment.

By: Catherine van Niekerk





4 April 2025

Dear Joan and the knitters of Sasohn,

We can't do what we do without you. Thank you for your generosity of time and love. What kind hearts you have! Not only are you helping keep the babies warm, in a practical way, but they are going to look so cute too. The jersey, beanie and booties are stitched with love. Thank you for making a difference in the community via Bless a Baby. Everything else in our bags can be bought, but the knitted goodies come from the heart. We so appreciate you.

Bless a Baby is over 22 years old

12 Distribution points

Karl Bremer Hospital, Kraaifontein Day Hospital, Tygerberg Hospital, Wesfleur Hospital in Atlantis, the Durbanville Clinic, Paarl Provincial Hospital, Mowbray Maternity Hospital, Delft, Elsie River, New Somerset Hospital, Eerste River and Bishop Lavis.

over 39791 families have been impacted by the end of March '25
375 filled nappy bags monthly, approx **93** weekly

Please take a look at our Facebook page to see what we do:
<https://www.facebook.com/blessababy2014> or contact us via our website:
www.blessababy.co.za or via El Shaddai Christian Church, 021 975-1983
Lord's Walk, Off Langeberg Road Durbanville, 7550

Thanking you
Glynne Rosselli and the Bless-a-Baby team



Thank you to everyone who contributes! We value you more than you know.



Western Cape "Bless a Baby" Knitting Project

SASOHN Western Cape's social responsibility project has grown over the past 4 years to not only include members, but several avid knitters from retirement communities in and around the Western Cape who are eager to contribute towards the project.

Not only does this keep them busy, it provides them with a sense of purpose, it fills their days doing something worthy of their skills and it gives them the satisfaction of knowing that they can still contribute to society in a very meaningful way.

This is a perfect example of how occupational health reaches far beyond the working class to those who are very young whom we will probably not encounter during our working lives in the workplace, and to those who have already left the workplace and are now enjoying their retirement.

Herewith a shout-out to the little ones to say, we see you and we look out for you. And a huge thank you to the retired ones to say we value you and we are grateful to you.

The letter from Bless A Baby reflects this message in a beautiful way and we hope to inspire other regions to take up similar projects in their communities too!



Mpumalanga Region Kicks Off Q2 with Energized Member Engagement

The Mpumalanga region launched the second quarter of 2025 on a high note, hosting a successful face-to-face meeting on 28 March, with 31 people in attendance. Marking a strong start to the year, the gathering saw a noticeable increase in attendance, signalling growing member engagement and interest.

The event featured the participation of four key exhibitors—Amtronix, Taga Medical, FouGrow, and Ampath—who showcased new equipment, medication, and laboratory services while providing valuable industry updates. Adding to the event's value, educational sessions were delivered by **Dumsile Zitha** on *Conflict Management* and **Jana Maritz** on *Medical Examinations*.

Spot prizes and a hamper, sponsored by exhibitors, added an element of fun and contributed to the day's lively and interactive atmosphere. In addition, all members in attendance received a beautifully designed keychain and coaster gift set, a thoughtful token of appreciation that was well-received and added a special touch to the event.

The meeting also served as the platform to launch the 2025 regional theme: **Let's THRIVE in 2025**. Members were encouraged to adopt and embody the theme's principles throughout the year as a shared commitment to professional and personal growth.

Looking ahead, the next regional meeting is set for **23 May 2025**, proudly hosted and sponsored by Ampath. The event will feature expert presentations from:

- **Dr. Kobus Hugo (Occupational Medical Practitioner)** and **Harry Wiltshire (Bio kineticist)** on *Managing Obesity in the Workplace*
- **Dr. Shareef Abrahams** on *Culture Shock: Old meets New in TB Diagnosis*
- **Dr. Muller Rossouw (Chemical Pathologist)** on *Approach to Arsenic and Cyanide Exposure*

Ampath will be applying for CPD accreditation for this event.

By: Tania Vos

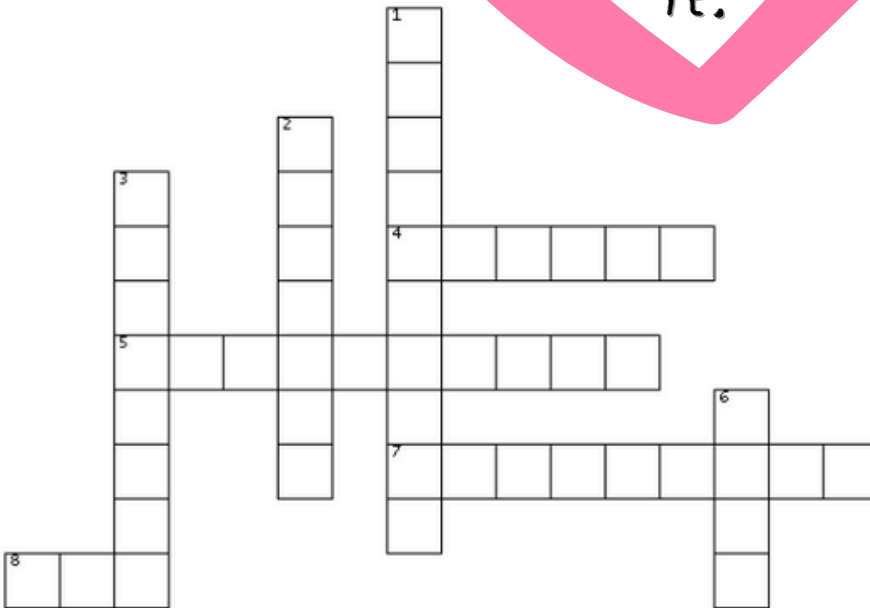
Thank you for taking the time to read the newsletter!
Please look at the last page (to follow) for something fun for you to do.

If you have any suggestions for future content, please feel free to share:

johanet.uys@gmail.com

Something different

FOR THOSE WHO LIVE LIFE DIFFERENTLY



ACROSS

- 4. Injury caused by repetitive motion at work
- 5. Physical factor like repetitive movement or vibration that can harm health
- 7. A contagious illness that spreads in workplaces
- 8. Protective clothing or equipment worn on the job

DOWN

- 1. Respiratory illness caused over a long period of time by inhaling hazardous fibres
- 2. Stress that occurs over a long period in the workplace
- 3. Type of assessment done before a person starts a job
- 6. _ Assessment: Legal document outlining workplace risks and controls

Answers will be shared in the next edition

Start where you are
Use what you have
DO WHAT YOU CAN