

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SASP Symposium 2026 to Explore the Future of Physiotherapy in South Africa

Johannesburg, South Africa – As healthcare systems around the world grapple with rapid technological change, evolving patient expectations and increasing demands on healthcare professionals, South Africa's physiotherapy community will gather this September to explore what the future of the profession could look like.

The South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP) will bring together physiotherapists, academics, researchers, healthcare leaders and industry partners from across the country for the SASP Symposium 2026, taking place on 4–5 September 2026 under the theme "Taking Physiotherapy into the Future."

The symposium will bring together physiotherapists from all sectors of the profession – including academics and researchers, clinical practitioners, private and public healthcare professionals, students and healthcare leaders – to explore the future of physiotherapy in an increasingly complex and technology-driven healthcare environment.

As healthcare continues to evolve in response to technological innovation, changing patient needs, workforce challenges and emerging models of care, physiotherapists are increasingly being called upon to contribute beyond the treatment room and play a leading role in shaping the future of healthcare through prevention, rehabilitation and recovery.

The two-day symposium will provide a platform for evidence-based learning, scientific exchange, professional development and meaningful discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing the profession.

The programme will begin on Friday, 4 September, with three pre-symposium streams: the **Audit Summit**, sponsored by **Garrun CFP / iTOO Special Risks**, themed "**Fraud, Waste, Abuse & Error: Clinical Governance in Modern Healthcare**"; the **Future Practice Forum**, themed "**Pain, Movement, Pelvic Health & Performance: A Modern Physio's Approach for South Africa**"; and the **Youth Indaba**, themed "**Paths, Purpose and Possibility: Making Your Mark – Impact, Influence and Income.**" Together, these specialised streams provide delegates with opportunities to engage on clinical excellence, clinical governance, professional practice, leadership and the future of the profession. The afternoon programme will feature symposium sessions exploring artificial intelligence, technology and innovation in healthcare, followed by the SASP Annual General Meeting. The symposium continues on Saturday, 5 September, with a full scientific programme featuring plenary discussions, roundtable conversations, poster presentations and networking opportunities designed to inspire, challenge and equip delegates for the future.

Dr Natalie Benjamin-Damons, PhD, President of the South African Society of Physiotherapy, said:

"The SASP Symposium 2026 represents an important opportunity for our profession to come together, share knowledge and explore the future of physiotherapy in South Africa. As healthcare continues to evolve, it is essential that physiotherapists remain engaged in the conversations shaping clinical practice, education, leadership and innovation, ensuring that we continue to deliver the highest standard of care to the communities we serve."

Prof Heleen van Aswegen, PhD, Chair of the SASP Scientific Committee, said:

"The SASP Symposium 2026 provides an important platform for physiotherapists to engage with the latest evidence, share research and learn from experts across a range of practice areas. By bringing together clinicians, educators and researchers, we strengthen our collective ability to translate evidence into practice and improve outcomes for the patients and communities we serve."

The symposium programme will explore a range of topics relevant to contemporary physiotherapy practice, including artificial intelligence, technology in healthcare, clinical excellence across the lifespan, leadership, policy and advocacy, education and the future workforce, equity and community health, National Health Insurance, ethics and the responsible use of AI. Through plenary discussions, workshops, roundtable conversations and scientific poster presentations, delegates will have the opportunity to engage with experts and peers on the issues shaping the future of physiotherapy in South Africa.

In addition to the scientific programme, the event will provide valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration between clinicians, researchers, educators, students, healthcare stakeholders and industry partners.

Prof Corlia Brandt, PhD, Chair of the SASP Professional Development Portfolio Committee, said:

"The future of physiotherapy depends on our willingness to embrace innovation while remaining grounded in the science and humanity of patient care. This symposium creates an opportunity for our profession to come together, learn from one another and collectively shape the future of physiotherapy in South Africa."

Registrations for the SASP Symposium 2026 are now open.

For more information, to view the programme, or to register, visit:

<https://saphysio.co.za/sasp-symposium-2026/sasp-symposium-2026/>

About the South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP)

The South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP) is South Africa's oldest and largest professional association representing physiotherapists. Founded in 1925, SASP is a founding member of World Physiotherapy and is committed to advancing the profession through advocacy, professional development, education, research and the promotion of evidence-based physiotherapy practice that improves the health and well-being of all South Africans.

About Dr Natalie Benjamin-Damons, PhD

Dr Natalie Benjamin-Damons is President of the South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP), a Senior Lecturer and researcher in Physiotherapy at the University of the Witwatersrand, and a Medico-Legal Expert and Mediator.

Her academic and research interests focus on paediatric disability, child development and rehabilitation, particularly improving healthcare outcomes and service delivery for children living with disabilities. She has extensive experience in clinical research, medical education, epidemiology, scientific writing and medico-legal assessment. Mentoring young professionals is integral to her teaching and leadership style.

As President of SASP, Dr Benjamin-Damons is committed to advancing the physiotherapy profession through leadership, advocacy, research and professional development, ensuring physiotherapists continue to play a meaningful role in improving health outcomes across South Africa.

About Prof Heleen van Aswegen, PhD

Prof Heleen van Aswegen is Chair of the SASP Scientific Committee and a Personal Professor in the Department of Physiotherapy within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand. She joined Wits University in 2002 and teaches cardiopulmonary physiotherapy at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Her research focuses on physiotherapy in the fields of critical care and trauma. She has more than 75 publications in peer-reviewed journals, has been an invited speaker at several national and international critical care, trauma and physiotherapy congresses, and collaborates in research with colleagues from Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Prof van Aswegen is editor of the book *Cardiopulmonary Physiotherapy in Trauma: An Evidence-based Approach* (2nd edition), published by World Scientific in 2024.

About Prof Corlia Brandt, PhD

Prof Corlia Brandt is Chair of the SASP Professional Development Portfolio Committee, serves on the National Executive Committee of SASP, and is an Associate Professor in Physiotherapy at the University of the Witwatersrand.

She obtained her BSc Physiotherapy, MSc Physiotherapy and PhD in Physiotherapy *cum laude* from the University of the Free State, followed by a MSc in Epidemiology at Wits. Her expertise spans neuromusculoskeletal physiotherapy, sport physiotherapy, women's health and pelvic health.

Prof Brandt has built a distinguished career integrating research, clinical practice and teaching. She has published extensively in national and international journals and has presented at leading international congresses. Her research focuses on translating evidence into practice and advancing physiotherapy care within the South African healthcare context.

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