

**MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE VASCULAR SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
HELD ON FRIDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2023**

**PRESENT:**

Dr D Le Roux, Prof T Mulaudzi, Dr P Mistry, Prof J Pillai, Dr B Dube, Dr T Monareng, Dr J Tunnicliffe, Dr S Ngema, Dr A Malan, Dr N Naidoo, Dr J Odendaal, Dr B Pillay, Dr B Sikhosana

+ Members as per attendance register attached (Annexure 1)

**APOLOGIES:**

Dr I Grant, Dr I Cassimjee

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The President, Dr Le Roux, welcomed members.  
Quorum present therefore voting can take place.

**2. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting had been previously disseminated and were taken as read. James Tunnicliffe confirmed the 2022 minutes, seconded by Kris Michalowski.

**3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

VASSA was approached by Dr Palma Shaw at WFVS, a worldwide conglomerate has been started to help with the education of new / young vascular surgeons. An executive decision was taken to ask Ian Grant to attend the Veith Congress in 2023.

James Tunnicliffe will also be attending the Veith Congress and will be asked to present a talk on behalf of VASSA in the WFVS session.

VASSA will be taking part in more meetings across the world with the societies represented at the congress. Speakers will be sent to these congresses where there is a WFVS component. Speakers can either be Exco or general VASSA members. Interested members to please make contact with Exco.

VASSA members receive a 10% discount to join ESVS based on 60% of VASSA members joining. As per Prof Maarit Venermo's talk, members receive access to the ESVS library and various apps which are worthwhile. VASSA members are encouraged to join.

Thanks were given to Asha Malan for the exceptional meeting. Good feedback has been received from all of the societies involved in the congress and would like to see it continue in the future.

Special focus was given to the challenges brought on by COVID-19 which had a big effect on congresses. VASSA lost a little amount of money due to deposits being paid for the congress which had to be cancelled. ESVS lost approximately 70 000 Euros due to the cancellation of the 2019 Congress which was meant to take place in Belfast. The ESVS congress will be taking place this year.

VASSA adapted and prioritized the health and safety of members and transitioned to virtual meetings. Thanks to Pradeep Mistry who started with the organising of these meetings. The virtual meetings were well attended and will still continue, probably four per annum. The next virtual meeting will be hosted by Jaki which will take place 30<sup>th</sup> September. VASSA is committed to continuing using the online platform with future meetings being hosted as hybrid meetings. A small symposium was held at the Johannesburg Surgical Hospital with 40 delegates attending onsite and 60 virtually.

Regarding the NHI, Exco is working on a proposal with Elsabe Klink. Jay Pillai is currently looking at the rough draft, submission is to be made middle of September

VASSA is one of three non-European societies that is part of ESVS. Dirk Le Roux represented VASSA as councillor and will be attending his last meeting in September in Belfast. The three non-European societies have less voting rights within the society; this is currently being fought as it is important to have more representation and voting rights. Maarit Venermo and Phillipe Kolh will be asked to assist.

VASSA was one of the founding members of the World Federation with Martin Veller being the first secretary general. When the federation was run by the smaller societies the support decreased purely due to logistics. The logistics are currently being run by either SVS or ESVS as they have the backing and the necessary technology to be running the World Federation. To be advised if the president and secretary general will be from one of the smaller societies. The current mandate of the World Federation is to bring education to the underprivileged societies. It is remarkable what they have been doing and should be supported.

Report from Exco meeting: Nothing has transpired from previously. It was confirmed that in order to vote and to be nominated you need to be a paid up VASSA member.

Over the last year or two VASSA has set up a complex aortic working group. VASSA recognised that there was a need for specialised expertise in treating complex aortic conditions especially with new available technology. VASSA took the initiative to establish this group and compromises of all vascular surgeons and everyone is invited to attend these meetings including trade who have a special interest in these cases. The meetings usually take place on a Thursday evening via the Zoom platform. Funders have also been invited so that they can see the complex process that VASSA goes through and that the cases go through a proper adjudication process. Many cases are thrown out or it is decided to do open rather than closed. Through regular meetings, case discussions and knowledge sharing the group has enhanced patient care and contributions to the advancement of complex aortic treatments in Southern Africa. Engagement will also be able to take place with the funders that attend the meetings.

Engagement with medical funders: The private practice group has been in communication with Discovery & Medscheme and are proactively engaged with these stakeholders. The group is advocating for a fair and improved reimbursement rate, trying to stream line the approval process for vascular procedures and also get greater access for our patients for specialised treatments.

There is ongoing communication and collaboration with the medical funds and the aim is to create a much more favourable environment for our members to ensure optimal patient care delivery. With that in mind, the Ethical Billings meeting was held in June 2023 which Pradeep Mistry convened. Only three documents have been received thereafter from the members. Members are asked to send these documents to Pradeep.

The President thanked the members for their support, dedication and contributions, especially in the field of vascular medicine in South Africa. To navigate future challenges, we must embrace innovation like has been done over the last three years and strengthen the commitment to improving vascular care in Southern Africa. Bearing in mind that VASSA is the ambassador for the patients especially when dealing with government.

Thanks were given to the VASSA Corporate Members. The fees and grants that have been committed have been exceptional.

#### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Professor Jay Pillai presented the Treasurers report.

VASSA currently has 133 members of which 74 are vascular surgeons. This number has grown by at least 7 vascular surgeons. 20 membership fees are currently outstanding for 2023 and 9 members have not paid for more than 2 years. There are currently 14 corporate members which have increased by 3 since last year. There is R150 000 still owing by 3 corporate members.

The bank balance has remained consistent over the last three years with between R4.8 million and R5.3 million in the account. The amount has remained stable mostly due to the corporate member income.

The new major expenses were as follows:

- Sponsorship towards the World Federation and European Society (R170 000)
- Coding meeting held in Johannesburg (R140 000)
- EJVS Subs (R138 000)

The 2023 VASSA Congress is suspected to make a small profit, likely under R200 000

Another expense was the legal bill (approximately R60 000) to Elsabe Klink for the NHI. The document of approximately 30 pages highlights the concerns regarding the NHI bill. It is expected that there will be an additional amount of approximately R30 000 payable.

Prof Pillai expressed his gratitude to the corporate members.

View Financial report Annexure 2

#### **5. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

- a. Society membership:** Dr Pradeep Mistry reported that VASSA currently has 133 members, 74 of whom are Vascular Surgeons.

With the Nurses and Allied Health programme currently taking place recruitment of members needs to

take place (Techs, theatre sisters, radiographers and sonographers). It was discussed at the Exco meeting the importance of sustaining these memberships long term. The current membership rate for Allied workers is R200. In the past there has not been much in terms of offering for them, membership needs to be sustained and increased and there needs to be an improvement in terms of service and education.

- b. Corporate membership:** With regards to the corporate members, there are currently 14 members
- c. 2024 membership fees:** It was decided at the Exco meeting that all membership fees for the year will be kept the same.

Exco is looking at Conference Partner managing the process of the Grand Rounds as well as the aortic working group and other hybrid and online meetings.

Social Media engagement, corporate identity as well as updating of the society website will be looked at. The idea is for the website to be more interactive, user friendly and engaging, a lot like what the bigger societies are providing.

With reference to the billings meeting, as soon as all of the outstanding documents are received the format will be standardised and then distributed to the members. It will not be a publishable document but will help the members with an ethical billing guide from a VASSA perspective. A session on billing could be included going forward.

With reference to research initiatives, a research session has been included in the congress as part of the Kobus van Marle memorial research initiative. Fellows have presented at the congress, the hope is for this to be sustained over a long time. VASSA is hoping to create an Exco position where research can be driven within the society as opposed to leaving it to the academic heads to drive.

## **6. NEW MATTERS**

### **a. Guidelines**

Two guidelines have been published over the last two years, the renal guidelines which is available on the website as well as the PAD guidelines, Bala Pillay is busy with the HIV consensus statement which will be published in 2024. It is not yet confirmed if this will be published in a journal or placed on the website as it is costly to publish in journals.

### **b. Grand Rounds**

Referred to in presidents report above

### **c. NHI and VASSA**

Referred to in presidents report above

### **d. Aortic working group**

Referred to in the presidents report above

## **7. FUTURE MEETINGS**

### **a. Date for the VASSA Congress 2024**

It was decided at the 2022 ASSA SAGES meeting that it would be best to have standalone meetings for VASSA, which has been started in this year.

An Exco decision was made that a biennial meeting will take place with ESVS and WFS including a large international contingent. The Allied Health Care meeting will also take place at this biennial meeting which will then have approximately 300 delegates attending in total.

Over the course of the next 10 years, the meetings will be held towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in October. The weather is expected to be better at this time of the year and the hope is that more international delegates will attend.

A smaller VASSA meeting will be held in 2024, a consensus and research meeting will be held at the same time.

It is not sustainable to have a big meeting each year.

Disengaging from ASSA and SAGES will save a lot of money for the society. In 2022 it cost VASSA to be a part of the joint congress and the delegate attendance to these meetings is not great. The society is hoping for a better attendance with these stand alone meetings and asks delegates to join.

## **8. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

### **a. Nominations and proxies received**

Nominations and voting was received via an online platform

**b. Voting**

It was decided at the meeting that if membership fees were still outstanding that members would not be penalised for this and the vote or nomination would still be taken into account. Due to there being possible administration glitch during the year it was asked that membership fees are settled immediately.

**c. Results of the election**

The results of the election will be shared via the VASSA Members Whatsapp group and will be announced at the 2023 VASSA Congress Gala Dinner.

**9. GENERAL / AOB**

Martin Forlee thanked Dirk Le Roux, Pradeep Mistry and the Exco for their hard work, achievements and initiatives within the society.

VASSA received an educational grant of R300 000 from a company in 2018/2019 which had not been used due to Covid. This grant was used this year to sponsor nurses to attend the Nurses and Allied Health programme.

Lewis Levien reminded all that 2024 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the society and that the 2024 congress should be appropriately arranged as such.

The balance sheet was posted on the Exco member Whatsapp group

Conference Partner will be assisting with the administration function for VASSA in the future as Alison McLean will be retiring.

**10. DATE OF THE NEXT AGM**

The next AGM will be held during the 2024 VASSA Congress. The specific date and venue still needs to be confirmed.

**ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

Myburgh	Ansu
Levien	Lewis
Rangaka	Thomas
Siknath	Donovan
Kowalczyk	Jarek
Tunncliffe	James
Michalowski	Kris
Matley	Phil
Malan	Asha
Tarkowski	Mariusz
Goga	Riaz
Saley	Mueen
Veller	Martin
Sander	Anthony
Mogase	Legae
Tsotetsi	Sabatta
Jafta	Lucien
Forlee	Martin
Louw	Arend
Odendaal	Jacobus
Louwrens	Helene
Mbebe	Thembi
Ngema	Siphumelele
Kadwa	Ahmed
Monareng	Taalib
Booi	Zuko
Pillai	Jay
Mistry	Pradeep
Marguerie	Barnard
Pillay	Bala
Boytchev	Hristo
Dube	Bhekifa
Sikhosana	Mbokelang
Mulaudzi	Thanyani
Cloete	Neil
Le Grange	Johnny
Cawood	Fred
Barnard	Charles
Snyman	Chris
Geldenduys	Reandre
Nad	Naidoo
Cilliers	Marceleen
Slavin	Marlise
Le Roux	Dirk

## Financial report – 30 June 2023

<u>Statement of Funds</u>			1 Jul 22 to 30 Jun 23	1 Jul 21 to 30 Jun 22
	Prior year's balance		5,474,541.25	5,458,567.58
	Profit/Loss for year		-214,646.81	15,973.67
			<u>5,259,894.83</u>	<u>5,474,541.25</u>
Bank account balances:				
	Investment Account		5,259,179.57	5,474,103.99
	Current Account		715.26	437.26
			<u>5,259,894.83</u>	<u>5,474,541.25</u>
<u>Income and Expenditure</u>			1 Jul 22 to 30 Jun 23	1 Jul 21 to 30 Jun 22
Income:				
Membership	Corporate fees		675,000.00	400,000.00
	Member fees		78,850.00	91,695.00
Other Income	Sponsorship		53,270.00	
Interest			278,298.39	130,996.57
			<u>1,085,418.39</u>	<u>622,691.57</u>
Expenditure:				
Administration			141,730.00	100,885.00
Bank Charges			2,325.16	1,575.26
Congress	VASSA 2022		214,807.44	
	VASSA 2023		131,450.00	
Consulting fee			28,274.37	12,219.61
Guideline meetings			15,915.21	31,260.00
Guideline publication				135,628.70
Journal subs	EJVES		138,425.16	69,253.34
Miscellaneous				1,092.50
Sponsorship			170,000.00	28,997.10
SAJS				60,000.00
Travel			236,282.08	115,000.00
VEF activities			80,823.14	50,806.39
Workshop	Coding		140,032.25	
			<u>1,300,064.81</u>	<u>606,717.90</u>
Net Income/Loss:			-214,646.81	318,846.86