

Cohsasa appoints new standards developer

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Cohsasa's new Healthcare Standards Development Coordinator is Dr Nicholas Burger. He comes into Cohsasa as a seasoned scientific researcher with three degrees in the field of sports science and exercise medicine but with a wider understanding of the intricacies shaping healthcare service delivery.

Nicholas' key responsibilities at Cohsasa will be to coordinate the standards development process to meet the requirements set out by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) for developing, implementing, reviewing and updating standards for healthcare facility accreditation.

Only 30-years-old, Nicholas describes his medium-to long-term career aspirations on his Linked-In profile as being "to enhance the quality of life and experience for all stakeholders interacting within healthcare systems, including patients and clinicians, through focused research methodologies, technological advances, and other innovative solutions."

His latest career move into standards development is where he believes he has found his *niche*. "I feel passionate about improving quality and mitigating risk for the benefit of all actors within the health system."



Nicholas Burger

No ivory-tower academic

Nicholas is not an ivory-tower academic, believing that research should not gather dust on a shelf. "Too many doctoral studies in South Africa concentrate on subjects that are obscure and irrelevant to the needs of the country. I believe that every thesis should add value by solving relevant issues so that it impacts on and benefits society."

Nicholas began his career at Stellenbosch University in 2008 where he studied for a BSc in Sport Science. He was the top overall student in his final year. This was followed by an Honours degree in Physiological Science a year later. His thesis focused on the damaging effects of downhill running on skeletal muscle. He then moved across to the University of Cape Town where his Masters degree morphed into a PhD in Exercise Science.

Mentored by a team of top SA Rugby medical experts and sports science legends (Dr Sharief Hendricks and Professors Mike Lambert and Tim Noakes), Nicholas embarked on research that would examine safe techniques in rugby tackling. His

research is frequently cited because – as anyone who follows the sport knows – rugby injuries can be catastrophic and life changing, and the area of injury prevention has gained immense momentum in recent years.

Making things safer and better

“Aside from the immediate injury and its medical consequences, it is also the financial and social implications that impact heavily on the player and his/her family.” These aspects concern Nicholas. It is part of what he wants to change about our society.

“I want to make things better and safer-whether it be on the field of play or in the operating theatre-through mitigating risk.”

He has presented work from his thesis at several local and international conferences including the 34th International Conference on Biomechanics in Sport in Japan (2016), the 16th Biennial Congress of the South African Sports Medicine Association in South Africa (2015), the 11th Annual Meeting and 6th Conference of HEPA (European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity) Europe in Turkey (2015), and the 20th Annual Congress of the European College of Sport Science in Sweden (2015).

From January 2012 to June 2019, Nicholas assisted with scientific research at the University of Cape Town’s Division of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (ESSM). His key responsibilities included data collection/management and analysis as well as mentoring and lecturing students. He has also conducted peer reviews for some of the world’s leading sports science and sports injury publications.

No stranger to academic publishing, Nicholas has published five academic papers as first author and six as co-author in some of the world’s most prestigious sports science journals including the American Journal of Sports Medicine, the British Journal of Sports Medicine, and the European Journal of Sport Science.

Prior to Cohsasa, Nicholas was employed as a healthcare consultant at US-based market research and consulting firm, Frost & Sullivan, where he focused on markets in Africa and the Middle East. He operated across various disease areas and healthcare sectors including pharmaceuticals, hospitals/healthcare infrastructure and medical devices.

For all his interest in sport (principally tennis and football) and his professional capacity to consult on health and wellness, Nicholas is not radical about prescribing wholesale lifestyle changes—unless they are warranted. “Changes to one’s lifestyle can be small and incremental and, if sustained and consolidated, will eventually manifest in improved quality of life and positive health outcomes.”

Welcome to Cohsasa Nicholas.

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Cohsasa 28 May 2024

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COHSASA

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