

LASSA 2009

The inaugural meeting of the **Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society of Southern Africa (LASSA)** was held in Johannesburg in September 1989 and was attended by approximately 100 delegates. LASSA was established by a small group of individuals led by Harry Seftel. The aim was to bring together researchers in many different disciplines who were contributing to, or could contribute, to knowledge in the field of lipidology.

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of LASSA and we have the honour of having Harry Seftel, the first Chair Person of LASSA, at this Anniversary meeting.

In 1989, when LASSA was first established, statin therapy had only just been introduced in our country. As we are all aware, statin therapy has revolutionized the treatment of severe dyslipidaemia, particularly familial hypercholesterolaemia, and the use of statin therapy has increased exponentially.

Unfortunately our Society has not grown at the same rate! Our membership has remained static, or if anything, has dwindled.

This year, in an attempt to resurrect interest in the field of Lipidology, we have decided to run a practical course on Lipidology or Lipid Update, which we hope will benefit those attending.

We also have the privilege of having an International lipid expert, Professor Andrew Neil, from Oxford, UK, who is responsible for the Simon Broome Familial Hyperlipidaemia Register in the United Kingdom.

As many of you are aware, Familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH) is one of the commonest heritable disorders in our country however, despite awareness, the condition remains under diagnosed and under treated. Although South Africa has a good track record of investigation into this condition, much more needs to be done to fully characterize both familial hypercholesterolaemia and other severe hereditary dyslipidaemias, in order to correctly diagnose and treat

these conditions. There is also an urgent need to re-establish and adequately fund tertiary Lipid Centres so that expert diagnosis and management assistance can be provided. Increased awareness, better diagnosis and optimum treatment of lipid disorders will benefit the health of all our people.

We would also like to encourage members of our Society and anyone interested in lipidology to consider submitting interesting cases or manuscripts to JEMDSA, the Journal for our Society.

Derick Raal

Professor F J Raal FCP(SA), FRCP, FRCPC, MMED(WITS), PhD
LASSA Secretary

on behalf of the Organising Committee, LASSA 2009