

15th NOFSA Congress 2012



In 1990, the Society of Endocrinology Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa (SEMDSA) and a diverse group of individuals interested in metabolic bone diseases in adults and children, held a combined congress in the Wilderness, a seaside village on the east coast of the Western Cape. The "boneheads" subsequently went on to establish the National Osteoporosis Foundation of South Africa (NOFSA) in 1993. This year, the Western Cape will again host a combined meeting. From 19-22 April, the 15th NOFSA and 47th SEMDSA Congress will be held at the President Hotel in Bantry Bay, Cape Town.

The NOFSA Congress promises to be an exciting and stimulating event, with a large number of plenary and oral presentations, meet-the-expert sessions, and lively debates on clinically relevant aspects of osteology. We have been particularly fortunate to secure a number of eminent international speakers. Steven Cummings is an emeritus Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at the University of California, San Francisco, and also the Director of the San Francisco Coordinating Center, which specialises in coordinating multi-centre studies in osteoporosis, and also other aspects of women's health, ageing, cardiovascular disease, breast cancer prevention and dementia. At this meeting, he will talk on the controversial topic of osteopenia and its treatment. Being at the cutting edge of the development of numerous new anti-osteoporosis drugs, Steve is also ideally suited to deliver a plenary talk on new osteoporosis treatments.

Roger Bouillon is Professor of Medicine, Experimental Medicine and Endocrinology, at the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium, and an international opinion leader on basic and clinical aspects of vitamin D biology. Other research interests include primary hyperparathyroidism and the role of androgens on bone. We have been trying to get Roger to visit our shores for some time, and are indeed very glad to now welcome him as our guest. Our third international speaker is Roberto Pacifici, presently the Garland Herdon Professor of Medicine and Director of Endocrinology, Metabolism and Lipids at the Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta, USA. My relationship with Roberto goes back to the early 1980s, when we were both fellows in Louis Avioli's Division of Bone and Mineral Metabolism at Washington University in St Louis, USA. Of course, Lou Avioli was an invited speaker at the 1975 SEMDSA Congress in

Johannesburg, and was instrumental in shaping my own career some time later. In more recent years, Roberto's research interests have involved the osteo-immunology of postmenopausal bone loss, the molecular mechanisms of action of estrogen on bone, and the role of T cells in the mechanism of action of parathyroid hormone. These are fascinating topics which he will share with us during his plenary talks at this meeting.

Over many years of combined SEMDSA-NOFSA congresses, the combined or overlap session which heralds the closing of the one meeting and the opening of the other, has proved to be a popular highlight, and this year will be no exception. One reason for this is that my old friend and colleague, Bob Millar, formerly from the Department of Chemical Pathology at the University of Cape Town, and presently from Edinburgh in the UK, will be giving his plenary talk on kisspeptin and neurokinin B, novel regulators of sex steroids for hormone-dependent disease with bone-sparing potential. Bob was convenor of the 1990 SEMDSA Congress, while I was tasked with the bone side of things. Who will ever forget the organising committee meetings over pizzas and beer, and Bob's innovative ideas of trying to make the congress more interesting? This included his plan of having an underwater poster session, with the good posters at the top, and the really bad ones at the bottom. Good to have you back in the Cape, Bob.

Cape Town has much to offer by way of entertainment, and March-April is undoubtedly the best time of the year to enjoy this. So, please make time to enjoy our beautiful city.

A word of sincere thanks to our sponsors, and in particular, the corporate advisory board of the Foundation, who despite the difficult economic climate, supported us to the hilt, and made this meeting possible. Please support our supporters, and visit their exhibition stands during the congress breaks. Thanks to my organising committee for all their help, and finally, a big thank you to our congress secretariat, Shelly, Tereza, and Naomi, for all their hard work and patience, and for putting up with me for so long.

Geniet die Kongres!

Stephen Hough

Chair person: Organising Committee and NOFSA