



PLEXUS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF ANATOMISTS

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- 54th Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA 2027) - Sunday 4 April to Wednesday 7 April 2027

Note from the President – Professor Helen Nicholson

Warm greetings to you all.

It was good to meet many of you at the IFAA Congress in Melbourne in August. It was an excellent Congress with over 900 delegates from across the world and the diversity of the themes really did provide “Anatomy for Everyone”. I would like to thank everyone who was involved in making it such a successful and fun meeting with special thanks to the Co-Chairs Quentin Fogg and Nalini Pather and the members of the Local Organising Committee. It was especially good to meet our Emergent Anatomist Awardees and hear how important attending was for their careers and confidence. Reports from some of the delegates can be found later in the newsletter. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, not everyone was able to come to the meeting in Melbourne. All our members are important, and we hope to see many of you at the next Congress in Santiago, Chile in September 2029!

The IFAA General Assembly, the meeting of representatives from all member associations, was held at the Congress and approved the membership of two new societies. I am delighted to welcome the Eurasian Organization of Morphologists and the Mexican Society of Anatomy to the IFAA.

Earlier this year member associations were asked to vote *ad referendum* on whether the IFAA should become an incorporated society and there was unanimous agreement with this proposal. To become an incorporated society requires some changes to our constitution and Prof Kramer has been leading a working group to revise the constitution. She spoke to the proposed changes at the General Assembly, and the revised constitution has now gone out to all member associations *ad referendum* for voting. Please complete your online voting form by 14 December 2026.

The Executive Committee also met in Melbourne. Environmental sustainability is a growing concern, and we have decided to establish an Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee under our Education Programme (FIPAE). The foundational members are Ruby Martini (USA), Hailey Wilkinson (USA) and Goran Strkalj (Australia) and I would like to invite each association to nominate a member to join this committee.

In other changes the IFAA is now on LinkedIn, so please connect and follow us! We have also set up generic emails for the President, Secretary General and Treasurer to aid continuity when the holders of these roles change. Finally, the IFAA World Anatomy Day, Thursday 15 October, is fast approaching. This year's theme is “Anatomy is for Everyone”, please join with Anatomists across the world to celebrate this day and communicate to our colleagues and the wider public the importance and breadth of Anatomy!

With best wishes,

Helen
president@ifaa.net

Note from the Editor

Welcome to the September 2026 edition of *Plexus*.

This issue reflects the remarkable breadth, diversity, and global reach of the anatomical sciences. As you will see throughout these pages, anatomists across the world continue to advance research, education, clinical practice, ethics, and public engagement while embracing emerging technologies that are reshaping our discipline.

A particular highlight of this edition is the coverage of the 22nd Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA) in Melbourne. The congress brought together anatomists, educators, clinicians, and researchers from across the globe under the inspiring theme "Anatomy for Everyone," providing a platform for scientific exchange, collaboration, and innovation. Reports from delegates and participating societies demonstrate both the vitality of our discipline and the strength of our international community.

This issue also showcases major meetings and initiatives from around the world, including SOCACON 2026, activities of the Federative International Subcommittee on Body Donation (FISBoD), the 51st Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA), and important discussions surrounding ethics, body donation, and human remains research. Collectively, these reports highlight the shared commitment of anatomists to excellence, integrity, and responsible practice.

Another recurring theme throughout this newsletter is the growing influence of artificial intelligence, digital technologies, advanced imaging, and simulation in anatomical research and education. While these innovations offer exciting opportunities, they also present important challenges related to research integrity, transparency, and educational best practice. As a community, we must continue to engage critically with these developments while preserving the core values that underpin anatomical science.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all contributors who submitted reports, photographs, reflections, and updates for this edition. Your willingness to share experiences from your institutions, societies, and conferences enables *Plexus* to serve as a valuable platform for communication and collaboration across the international anatomical community.

I hope you enjoy this issue and find inspiration in the achievements, innovations, and collective efforts of colleagues from around the world. As always, we welcome future contributions and look forward to sharing your news, research, and activities in forthcoming editions.

With best wishes,

Shiby Stephens

Editor, Plexus

Reports

FICSP Symposium at the 22nd IFAA Congress, Melbourne

Publishing in Anatomy Today: Navigating Editorial Expectations and Common Author Challenges

15 AUGUST 2026 • MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



Opening of FICSP Symposium No. 77 at the 22nd IFAA Congress. The session was chaired by Valéria Paula Sassoli Fazan and Sergey Dydykin.

From editorial expectations to strategic publishing

The Federative International Committee for Scientific Publications (FICSP) organised a symposium during the 22nd Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA), held in Melbourne, Australia, from 13-16 August 2026. Chaired by Professors **Valéria Paula Sassoli Fazan** and **Sergey Dydykin**, the session addressed some of the most relevant issues facing authors and editors in contemporary anatomical publishing.

Professor **Valéria Paula Sassoli Fazan** discussed the editorial perspective on publishing anatomical case reports, highlighting the importance of scientific relevance, accurate anatomical terminology, appropriate contextualisation of findings, and ethical use of images. Professor **Sergey Dydykin** focused on difficulties commonly encountered by novice authors, including inappropriate journal selection, insufficient novelty, methodological weaknesses, manuscript structure, referencing, and adherence to journal guidelines.

Professor **Kumar Satish Ravi** addressed the strategic importance of selecting an appropriate journal for a manuscript. His presentation considered journal scope and readership, indexing, peer-review standards, open-access models, ethical publishing practices, and their implications for the visibility and scholarly impact of research.



Kumar Satish Ravi presenting “Why Publish? Mastering Strategic Journal Selection for Maximum Scholarly Impact.”

Artificial intelligence and research integrity

Professor **Yuriy Vasil'ev** examined the rapidly growing role of artificial intelligence in anatomy and scientific publishing. His presentation highlighted both its potential applications and concerns related to AI-generated text and images, disguised plagiarism, data reliability, image manipulation, reproducibility, and the increasing challenges AI presents for peer review and editorial verification. The need for transparent disclosure of AI use, data provenance, and clear editorial policies was emphasised.



Yuriy Vasil'ev discussing the opportunities and challenges associated with artificial intelligence in anatomical research and publishing.



Scientific discussion following the symposium, continuing the exchange of perspectives on contemporary challenges in anatomical publishing.

The symposium provided practical guidance for researchers at different stages of their careers and stimulated discussion on how anatomical research can be communicated more effectively, ethically, and strategically. It also highlighted the growing importance of transparency, reproducibility, research integrity, and the responsible use of emerging technologies as scientific publishing continues to evolve.

The session reflected FICSP's continuing commitment to promoting high standards in scientific publishing and supporting the international anatomical community in navigating an increasingly complex publication landscape.

SOCACON 2026

World Congress of Clinical Anatomist

14th International Conference of the Society of Clinical Anatomists (SOCA), India
2-4 April 2026 | NIMS University Rajasthan, Jaipur



SOCACON 2026 at NIMS University Rajasthan, Jaipur

Theme: “Integrating Clinical Anatomy with Imaging and Artificial Intelligence for the Next Generation”

1. Conference Overview

SOCACON 2026 - the World Congress of Clinical Anatomists and 14th International Conference of the Society of Clinical Anatomists (SOCA), India - was hosted by the Department of Anatomy, National Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, NIMS University Rajasthan, Jaipur, from 2-4 April 2026. The Congress brought together anatomists, clinicians, surgeons, researchers, educators and students to explore contemporary developments in clinical anatomy, imaging, artificial intelligence, surgical training, simulation and anatomical sciences education.

The meeting aimed to strengthen the clinical application of anatomy, integrate imaging and artificial intelligence into anatomical sciences, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, enhance medical education through simulation and digital technologies, and encourage participation by young researchers and students.

2. SOCACON 2026 at a Glance

Metric	Number	Metric	Number
Total registrations	900	National registrations	881
International registrations	19	Countries represented	12
Pre-conference workshops	4	Total workshop attendance	117
Keynote addresses	6	Panel discussions	3
Thematic symposia	8	Oral presentations	172
Poster presentations	144	Total research presentations	316
Abstracts for publication	316	National Quiz participants	61

Delegates represented India, USA, UK, Germany, Australia, Scotland, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Rwanda and Oman.

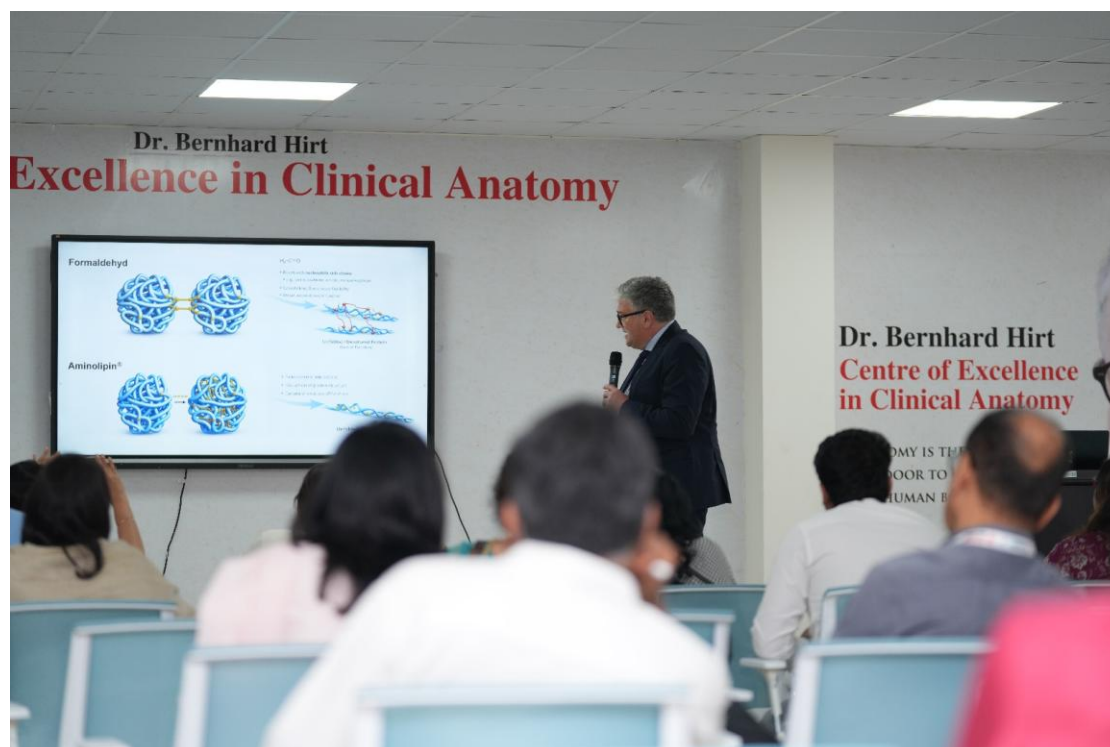


Delegates and dignitaries at SOCACON 2026

3. Pre-Conference Workshops

Four practical workshops were held on 2 April 2026, spanning emerging educational, research and clinical applications of anatomy.

Workshop	Principal focus	Attendance
AI-Driven Anatomy Micro-Modules	Generative AI, clinical images and clinically relevant anatomy teaching resources	22
Systematic Review & Meta-analysis	Evidence synthesis, literature searching, screening, data extraction and responsible use of AI	27
Applied Clinical Anatomy in ART	Reproductive anatomy, imaging, IVF, oocyte retrieval, embryo transfer and simulation	38
Surgical Training in Anatomy	Soft-embalmed and fresh-frozen bodies, preservation methods, digital augmentation and surgical training	30



Pre-conference workshop on contemporary models and innovations in surgical training

4. Scientific Programme

The scientific programme on 3 and 4 April comprised keynote lectures, panel discussions, thematic symposia, oral and poster presentations, and the National Anatomy Quiz.

Keynote addresses

Dr Bernhard Hirt: From Anatomy Lab to Surgical Training Center: Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Prof. Hee-Jin Kim: Comprehensive Facial Anatomical Researches and their Clinical Insight and Implications

Dr Sarman Singh: Anatomy from a Clinical Microbiologist's Perspective

Dr Jason Organ: The Anatomy of Peer Review: What Every Author Should Know

Prof. Paul M. Rea: From Scalpel to Simulation: Integrating Anatomy, Imaging, and AI for the Future of Medical Education

Prof. G. P. Pal: Distribution of Motor Neurons in the Human Spinal Cord



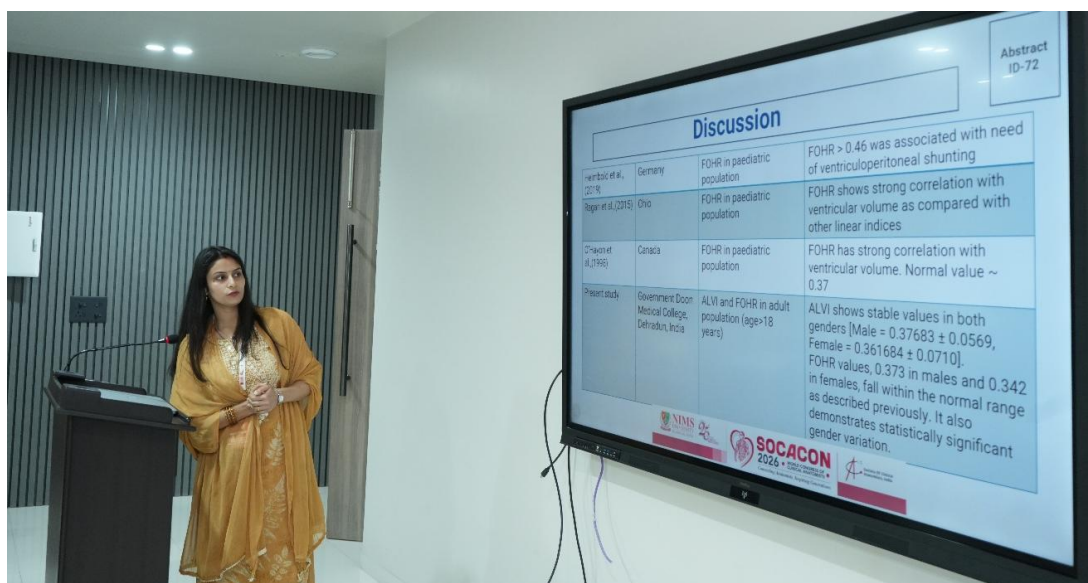
Keynote session during the SOCACon 2026 scientific programme

Panel discussions and symposia

Three major panel discussions considered AI and anatomy education, the evolution of anatomy research from descriptive to translational and imaging-based approaches, and the future of anatomy as a career. Eight thematic symposia addressed scientific publication, pancreatic islets and transplantation, clinical anatomy, ethical and legal challenges in body donation, neural circuitry of stress, stem cells and ageing, translational anatomical research, and competency-based anatomical sciences education.

5. Research Presentations and Academic Output

Research formed a major component of the Congress. Across four parallel presentation slots, 172 oral papers and 144 posters were presented - a total of 316 research presentations. The report records 316 abstracts for publication in *Anatomical Sciences Education*, published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Association for Anatomy.



One of the parallel oral research presentation sessions

6. National Anatomy Quiz

The National Quiz Competition attracted 61 participants in the preliminary round, conducted using Kahoot. Eight finalists representing four teams progressed to a six-round offline final, with first, second and third prizes presented during the valedictory programme.

7. Inauguration and Academic Recognition

The Congress was formally inaugurated in the presence of SOCA leadership, national and international dignitaries and the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Dr Prem Chand Bairwa. The programme included addresses from SOCA and NIMS University leadership, the official release of the SOCACON 2026 Souvenir, SOCA Achievement Awards and felicitation of dignitaries.



Inaugural ceremony of SOCACON 2026

The valedictory session recognised achievements in oral and poster presentations, the National Quiz and international essay competitions. Further honours included the R. N. Mukherjee Memorial Award, Lifetime Achievement Award, Fellowship of SOCA and awards recognising exemplary service to anatomy and body donation programmes.



Recognition and cultural programme during SOCACON 2026

8. CME Accreditation and Ethical Compliance

SOCACON 2026 was accredited by the Rajasthan Medical Council. Speakers received 3 CME credit hours per day and participants 2 credit hours per day. The Congress reported transparent sponsorship disclosure, maintenance of scientific independence, prohibition of direct or indirect pharmaceutical promotion, and compliance with Rajasthan Medical Council/NMC norms.

9. Sponsorship and Support

- Platinum Sponsor: LICIT Solutions
- Gold Sponsors: Brahmersive India and Pirogov Interactive Anatomy
- Silver Sponsor: Elsevier
- Knowledge Partners: CBS Publishers and Thieme India

10. Outcomes and Impact

- 900 delegates representing 12 countries participated in the Congress.
- Four pre-conference workshops provided focused practical training to 117 attendees.
- The programme showcased developments in clinical anatomy, imaging, AI, simulation and surgical training.
- 316 oral and poster research presentations supported dissemination and academic exchange.
- The Congress strengthened interdisciplinary and international collaboration and supported young anatomists and researchers.

- The programme promoted integration of emerging technologies with anatomical sciences education and clinical practice.

SOCACON 2026 demonstrated the continuing evolution of anatomy from a foundational biomedical science into an increasingly clinical, technological and translational discipline.

Acknowledgements

The Society of Clinical Anatomists (SOCA), India, acknowledges NIMS University Rajasthan, the Organising Committee, invited national and international faculty, delegates, researchers, students, sponsors, knowledge partners and supporting teams whose collective efforts contributed to the successful delivery of SOCACON 2026.

International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA)

University of Johannesburg (UJ)

Department of Human Anatomy and Physiology (HAP)

International Conference Attendance

Prof Shahed Nalla attended the 22nd Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA), held from 13–16 August 2026 in Melbourne, Australia. The successful acceptance of a Surgical and Clinical Anatomy Symposium entitled “*The Cervical Vertebral Column - A Pillar of Morphological and Morphometric Variations and Anomalies*” included seven presentations delivered. The Symposium was chaired by Shahed Nalla, Juan José Valenzuela-Fuenzalida and Glen Paton (UJ: Department of Chiropractic). Prof Nalla delivered a paper titled “Odontoid angulation in the South African population – what’s the twist?”, which resulted from a Master's research study co-supervised with Dr Paton.



Image 1: Participants of the Symposium (from left): Dr. Glen Paton, Prof. Shahed Nalla and student delegates with Prof. Valenzuela-Fuenzalida from Chile (second from right).



Image 2: Prof Shahed Nalla delivering his presentation during the Symposium.

Human Anatomy and Physiology Society (HAPS) Regional and International Education Conference

Prof Nalla also attended a pre-conference workshop held at the Clayton Campus of Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, on 12 August 2026. The workshop titled "Innovation in 3D anatomy: Enhancing assessments and rural education" was presented by staff and students of the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, School of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. This workshop allowed delegates to experience shared experiences through hands-on, interactive sessions that highlighted the use of 3D anatomy technologies in Medical and Allied Medical teaching and learning. Prof Nalla also attended the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society (HAPS) Regional and International Education Conference: Teaching and Learning for the future of Anatomy and Physiology held at the Monash Conference Centre on 17 August 2026. The theme of this conference was *Think Curiously. Create Boldly. Reflect Deeply. Connect Globally* and hosted the keynote speakers Prof. Michelle Lazarus and Dr Pariece Nelligan from Monash University, Australia and Prof. Claudia Krebs, University of British Columbia, Canada. Topics ranged from “*Gamification in Teaching: When to Use It, How to Use It, and When Not To*” to “*Designing Better Teamwork: A Scaffolded, Evidence-Informed Approach to Student Collaboration*”.



Image 3: Interesting presentation related to 3D imaging and prints utilised in teaching at Monash University in Clayton, Melbourne, Australia.

Community Engagement

HAP Postgraduate Event: Bodies of Knowledge

The Department of Human Anatomy and Physiology is pleased to announce its upcoming Postgraduate Research Event, taking place from 22–23 September 2026. The event will provide an opportunity to showcase postgraduate research within the department and to engage with experienced academics through two online sessions featuring invited speakers from the University of Cape Town in the Western Cape. We are delighted to welcome Prof Graham Louw and Mr Leonard Shapiro, who will share their expertise and insights with our postgraduate community. All are warmly invited to attend the online sessions. Please see the attached flyer for further information, including the programme and session details.

Dr Sundika Ishwarkumar-Govender

BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE

HAP POSTGRADUATE EVENT



22 – 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

Two days of postgraduate research exhibits and invited online talks celebrating the breadth of work in Human Anatomy and Physiology and the many ways anatomy connects across diverse disciplines.



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EXHIBITION

Explore the diverse research undertaken by our postgraduate researchers.



Atrium A, John Orr Building
Doornfontein Campus,
University of Johannesburg



22 & 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

09:00 – 13:00 | 14:00 – 15:00

Come, engage, and discover the innovation and curiosity driving research in our Department.

Two days. Multiple perspectives. A world of knowledge.

INVITED ONLINE SPEAKERS

Join our invited speakers as they share insights from their fields, showcasing the multidisciplinary nature of anatomy.

DAY 1



Prof Graham Louw

Tuesday, 22 September 2026



13:00 – 14:00 SAST



LIVE ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
Scan the QR code



DAY 2



Mr Leonard Shapiro

Wednesday, 23 September 2026



13:00 – 14:00 SAST



LIVE ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
Scan the QR code



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Doornfontein Campus | Soweto Campus

Editable PowerPoint: QR overlays and Teams links can be replaced/updated.



21 YEARS OF IMPACT

A national online ethics discourse was organized by the Department of Human Biology, University of Cape Town (Associate Professor Geney Gunston), and the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) Ethics Interest Group (Dr Brendon Billings: Chair). The aim of the Discourse was to foster thoughtful, inclusive, and critical dialogue on i) whether research with state-consented human remains is ethical, ii) appropriate ethical practices relating to consent for the research use of human remains, within the context of South Africa and iii) to document recommendations for reaching national consensus/ practices.

Participants included Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) representatives and academics from South African institutions with body donor programmes or skeletal collections, Inspectors of Anatomy, representatives from the National Health Research Ethics Council and from Forensic Pathology Services.

The workshop was structured to encourage balanced participation and meaningful discussion. The following short presentations were followed by discussion. The discussion facilitator was Emeritus Professor Anne Pope (University of Cape Town):

1. **Acceptable provenance for human anatomy research:** Current state of donor programmes across the country, different provenance types between institutions, reasons for the continued use of unclaimed remains, and ethical complexities around pauper burials and morgues. Emeritus Professor Beverley Kramer (Immediate past-President: International Federation of Associations of Anatomists, University of the Witwatersrand)
2. **The current state of South African morgues:** Infrastructure, resources, and capacity challenges; impact on donor systems; pressures on universities to accept unclaimed remains due to morgue incapacity; and whether universities provide a more dignified alternative. Associate Professor Desire Brits (President of Anatomical Society of Southern Africa, University of the Witwatersrand)
3. **Skeletal collections:** Implications of transitioning to ethical donor programmes, sustainability challenges, demographic limitations, and the evolving nature of legacy collections. Considerations include dependence on family donations, demographic representation, and the shift from contemporary to historical collections.
Dr Mandi Albas (Stellenbosch University)
4. **South African donor forms and alignment with IFAA recommendations:** Diversity of donor forms across institutions, aspects requiring attention, alignment gaps, and language considerations.
Dr Keegan Meiring (Stellenbosch University)

The meeting concluded with the following recommendations:

- Development of National Guidelines for the ethical management of human remains, drawing on existing international standards but adapting them to local cultural, legal, and operational contexts.
- Multidisciplinary Collaboration, including anatomists, anthropologists, ethicists,

philosophers, legal experts, and community representatives in decision-making bodies at both institutional and national levels to ensure comprehensive and defensible frameworks.

- Addressing unresolved questions about legacy collections.
- Targeted outreach to underrepresented communities, improved public education about body donation, and the development of sustainable funding and resource models to support ethical practice.

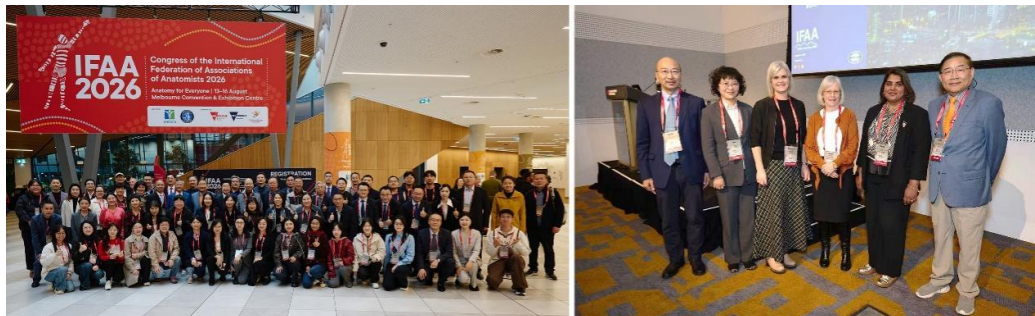


Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) group photo taken at the 51st Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) that was hosted by the Department of Human, Biological & Translational Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Namibia in at Swakopmund Plaza Hotel, Swakopmund, Namibia (12 – 15 April 2026).



Photos of members of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) having fun at the 22nd Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists, hosted in Melbourne, Australia (13-16 August 2026).

Chinese Delegation at the 22nd IFAA congress Melbourne, Australia | 13th -16th August 2026



The Chinese delegation at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Overview

The 22nd International Federation of Associations of Anatomists (IFAA) Congress was held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre under the theme "Anatomy for Everyone". The Chinese Society for Anatomical Sciences (CSAS) organised a delegation of more than 85 scholars, educators, clinicians and industry representatives from leading institutions across China. The delegation contributed extensively to the scientific programme through a plenary keynote, symposia, an international panel, oral and poster presentations, and industry participation.

Participation at a Glance

Measure	Participation
Delegation	85+ participants
Oral presentations	58, including 1 plenary keynote
Symposia chaired	10
Additional symposia participation	2
International panels moderated	1
Poster presenters	16 faculty members and students
Chinese Gold Sponsors	2

Plenary Keynote

On 15 August, Professor Guang Wang (Jinan University) delivered a plenary keynote on ATG7 (autophagy-related protein 7), outlining its roles in cell-cycle regulation, neural differentiation and spinal cord injury repair, and linking fundamental mechanisms with clinical translation.



Plenary keynote address by Professor Guang Wang

Scientific Leadership and Symposia

Chinese scholars chaired 10 symposia, participated in two additional symposia and moderated one international panel. Their contributions covered neuroscience and cell biology, imaging anatomy, surgical and clinical anatomy, and anatomical sciences education.

Theme	Selected areas
Neuroscience & cell biology	Human brain banking; neural development, injury and regeneration; cellular homeostasis; neural circuits; and neurodegenerative disease.
Imaging anatomy	Digital human applications, sectional anatomy, 3D reconstruction, virtual reality, AI-assisted visualisation and digital anatomy laboratories.
Surgical & clinical anatomy	Dynamic imaging, facial anatomy, myocutaneous flaps, biomechanics, mesoscopic anatomy and clinical translation.
Anatomical sciences education	AI and immersive technologies in anatomy education, digital integration and future-oriented approaches to assessment.



Chinese scholars contributed across a broad range of symposium sessions

Oral and Poster Presentations

Beyond the flagship sessions, Chinese researchers contributed strongly to the parallel scientific programme. Twenty researchers, from senior academics to graduate students, delivered oral presentations on topics including neuroscience and clinical anatomy. Sixteen faculty members and students also participated in the poster exhibition, presenting work in areas such as morphological measurement and digital anatomy.



Chinese researchers presenting their work during the Congress

Digital Anatomy and Educational Innovation

The delegation also showcased digital educational innovation. Demonstrations included 3D autostereoscopic layered anatomy and cloud-based digital heart specimens accessed by QR code, illustrating the development of interactive digital resources and platform-based infrastructure for anatomy education.



Digital anatomy and technology demonstrations at the Congress

Enterprise Participation

Two Chinese medical technology companies participated as Gold Sponsors. Shandong Digital Human Technology Co., Ltd. presented its "Anatomica Immersiva" platform, integrating high-fidelity anatomical datasets with 3D reconstruction, VR and AI-enhanced interaction. Zhangjiagang Huayi Science and Education Equipment Co., Ltd. showcased its "Neo-Anatomica" anatomical model series, highlighting developments in biomimetic materials and educational accuracy.



Chinese industry participation and anatomical technology showcased at the Congress

Conclusion

The Chinese delegation made a substantial contribution to the 22nd IFAA Congress through scientific leadership, research dissemination, educational innovation and industry engagement. Participation across plenary, symposium, panel, oral and poster sessions strengthened international dialogue and collaboration, while providing opportunities for senior researchers to support early-career scholars and for educators, clinicians and basic scientists to exchange ideas.

The Chinese Society for Anatomical Sciences extends its sincere thanks to all delegates, presenters, session chairs, sponsors and supporting institutions for their contributions.

23 August 2026

The IFAA Subcommittee on Body Donation holds two types of virtual meetings (via videoconference): a) meetings with IFAA member associations or, occasionally, with anatomists who request its support; and b) meetings of the Subcommittee members. The initial meetings with the associations are for sharing information, considering the context and developing proposals. Subsequent follow-up meetings are held to review any progress or difficulties that arose and to reconsider strategies, if necessary. The meetings of FISBoD members are for analysing the meetings with the associations, discussing specific topics, and planning particular tasks. Each of these meetings lasts approximately one and a half hours.

Since the start of activities in October 2024, we have held 40 meetings with 24 IFAA member associations (type a) and 14 meetings of the Subcommittee members type b).

Although FISBoD followed a consistent approach for our meetings with associations, each meeting led to a different outcome, due to the diversity of situations each country faces. FISBoD sought to understand, interpret and propose alternatives to address difficulties in order to help associations to develop their own strategies.

For this report, we will mention some of the relevant issues we identified:

- Most associations are unaware of the IFAA guidelines, although those that have Body Donation Programs (BDP) generally agree with their provisions. FISBoD has helped disseminate the guidelines.
- We have interviewed associations with very diverse situations, ranging from having a BDP at every university to not even having considered the matter previously. In all cases, we have learned a great deal from each meeting. The strategies for developing BDPs in some countries are outstanding and can surely be helpful for other associations. In other cases, we have managed to encourage (to a greater or lesser extent) anatomists to begin or resume the path of body donation.
- Some countries have legislation that facilitates the use of unclaimed bodies and thus have access to bodies without the work and effort required to create and develop a donation programme. We have encouraged them to change the way bodies are acquired on ethical grounds, while also emphasising the beneficial effects of BDP on attitudinal change of students, and on the public appreciation of anatomists generated by the dissemination of donation programs.
- Associations wishing to initiate new BDPs often point out a lack of financial resources. However, it is difficult to determine the true extent of this issue. Undoubtedly, starting a BDP requires financial support from the university, but this varies depending on the current modality of work (unclaimed bodies are being received, preserved, stored and used, or cadaveric material and facilities are completely unavailable).
- In some of the initial meetings, only the Association President and/or an IFAA representative participated. However, in several cases, attendees requested a second meeting with anatomists from different universities. We have also had an excellent response to the follow-up meetings. We believe these meetings have been well-received and considered useful.

- Specific information relating to each association is protected by a confidentiality agreement among FISBoD members.

We believe we have made significant progress in most of the cases. Some anatomists have begun extensive work for their universities' BDPs and others have taken an interest in the topic and begun to develop strategies to overcome difficulties.

Undoubtedly, the work of FISBoD will be arduous, ongoing and extensive, but we are confident in the progress.

FISBoD members:

Benjamin Arko-Boham (Ghana)

Agustin Cabrera (Uruguay)

Raffaele De Caro (Italy)

Brenda De Gama (South Africa)

Ilke A. Gürses (Turkey)

Bernard Moxham (United Kingdom)

Madiah Rushaidi (Malaysia)

Chair: Susana Biasutto (Argentina)

FISBoD has met with the following associations

Panamerican Association of Anatomy

Argentine Association of Anatomy

Argentine Association of Clinical Anatomy

Bulgarian Anatomical Society

Chinese Society of Anatomical Sciences (CSAS)

The Association of Anatomists of Chinese Taipei (Taiwan)

Colombian Association of Morphology

Czech Anatomical Society

Ecuadorian Society of Morphofunctional Sciences

Anatomische Gesellschaft

Hungarian Anatomists Society

Indonesian Anatomists Association

Ivorian Society of Morphology

Macedonian Association of Anatomists

Malaysian Anatomical Association

Myanmar Anatomy Society

Society of Nepalese Anatomists (SONA)

Anatomical Society of Nigeria (ASN)

Society of Experimental and Clinical Anatomists of Nigeria

Society of Clinical Anatomy of Rwanda (S-CAR)

Serbian Anatomical Society

Anatomical Society of Sri Lanka

The Anatomical Association of Uganda (UAA)

Scientific Society of Anatomists, Histologists, Embryologists and Topography Anatomists of Ukraine



The 51st Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) was hosted by the Department of Human, Biological & Translational Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Namibia in at Swakopmund Plaza Hotel, Swakopmund, Namibia (12 – 15 April 2026).



Welcome to Swakopmund, Namibia

The theme of this year’s conference was “Anatomy for All: Collaboration Meets Community” and echoed to the ethos of ASSA where all are welcomed! We welcomed approximately 75 attendees, representing Namibia, South Africa, Nigeria, Finland, UK and Portugal.

The conferences started off with a series of pre-conference workshops organized by the various ASSA interest groups. This included the:

- Medical Education Interest Group Session & Ethics Interest Group Session themed “Integrating Ethics into Public Outreach and Anatomical Sciences Education”
- Clinical Anatomy Interest Group Session themed “Tools for Clinical Anatomy Research”
- Forensic Anthropology Interest Group Session themed “Forensic Anthropology in Context: Advancing Practice Through Collaboration”

- Technical Interest Group Session theme “3D printing techniques and its application in Anatomy”

The first official conference event was the prestigious Thompson-Stibbe Lecture. We were honoured to welcome Prof Adam Taylor a full Professor of Anatomy and Director of Engagement and Innovation in Lancaster Medical School, Lancaster University, England, UK as our speaker. This incredible, thought-provoking lecture put the importance of Anatomy, Anatomy education and Anatomy communication to all, in perspective.



Prof Adam Taylor

The first day of the conference commenced with a plenary presentation by Prof Eugénia Cunha, a full professor at the University of Coimbra and Director of the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science, South Delegation, in Lisbon, Portugal entitled “Why Forensic Anthropology is Now an Irreplaceable Discipline: Lessons Learned from African Cases”. We were also privileged to have a second plenary presentation by Prof Kathryn Smith, an Associate Professor at Stellenbosch University, where she established the VIZ.Lab, entitled “HeartWorks: transformative learning through interdisciplinary art-science and cross-curriculum collaboration”.

The three-day conference focused on Biological Anthropology (Forensic Anthropology, Bioarcheology, Comparative Anatomy), Traditional Anatomy (Clinical/Morphological Anatomy, Biomedical Sciences, Cell Biology, Histology and Developmental Biology) and Medical Education and Ethics themes. Our program included 49 podium presentations and 25 poster presentations.

The council of the ASSA awarded the following prizes to attendees in recognition of their outstanding presentations:

- Antoinette Kotze prize (award for best first-time oral presentation): Shared by J Naiker and KS Regan (both from the University of Pretoria)
- ASSA award best oral presentation (award for best young oral presentation): D Finaughty (University of the Witwatersrand)
- Willie Vorster prize (award for best overall poster presentation by a first-time presenter): J Layman-Lemphane (Stellenbosch University)
- SV Naidoo prize (award for best overall poster presentation): D Kristen (Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University)

- Hanno Boon prize (award for best medical education oral presentation): L Prigge (University of Pretoria)
- Technical prize (award for best technical presentation): J Gavin (University of the Witwatersrand)



Antoinette Kotze prize (award for best first-time oral presentation): left to right, winners J Naiker and KS Regan (University of Pretoria), and second runner-up NR Loubser (University of the Witwatersrand)



ASSA award best oral presentation (award for best young oral presentation): left to right, winner D Finaughty (University of the Witwatersrand), first runner-up N Jackson (University of the Witwatersrand) and second runner-up J Naidoo (Nelson Mandela University; award accepted by B De Gama)



Willie Vorster prize (award for best overall poster presentation by a first-time presenter): left to right, winner J Layman-Lemphane (Stellenbosch University; award accepted by K Keet), first runner-up P Budaki (University of the Witwatersrand) and second runner-up S Moboea (University of the Witwatersrand)



SV Naidoo prize (award for best overall poster presentation): left to right, second runner-up N Mogale (University of Pretoria), first runner-up AN van Schoor (University of Pretoria) and winner D Kristen (Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University)

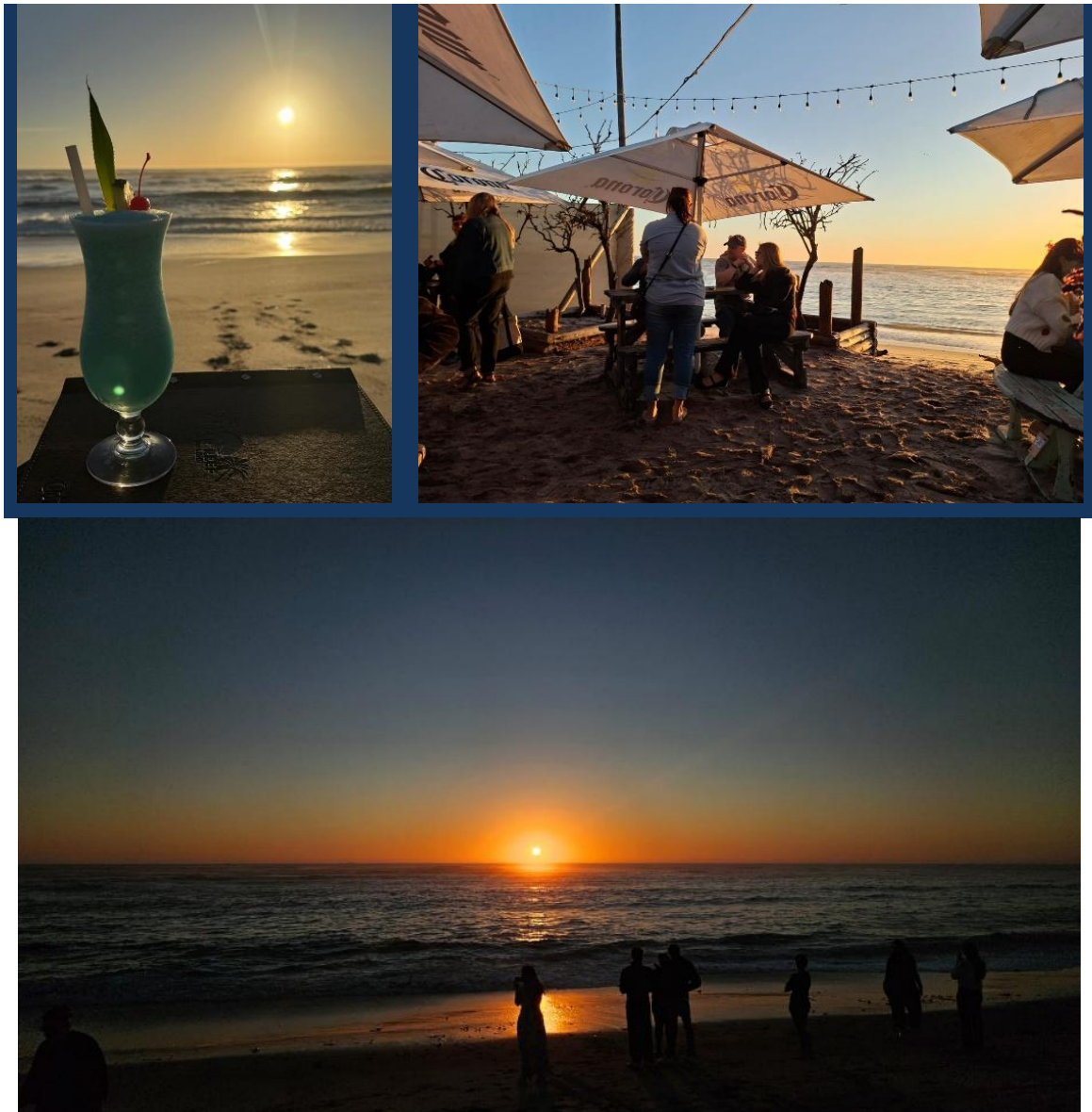


Hanno Boon prize (award for best medical education oral presentation): left to right, winner L Prigge (University of Pretoria), first runner-up Q Chinenere (University of the Witwatersrand) second runner-up A Alblas (Stellenbosch University; award accepted by K Keet)



Technical prize (award for best technical presentation): left, winner J Gavin (University of the Witwatersrand) and right, first runner-up CS Opuwari (University of the Western Cape, award accepted by N Mogale)

Other conference activities included the IFAA President's Emergent Anatomists Program which was a "Speed networking event" facilitated by Dr Shavana Govender, Ms Natasha Loubser & Ms Tamara Lottering (University of the Witwatersrand); a Student Social / Academic Networking event organized by the previous ASSA president, Prof Albert van Schoor (University of Pretoria) as well as our conference "Gala Dinner" on the beach at the unforgettable Tiger Reef Beach Bar & Grill with an unforgettable sunset.



Gala dinner at the Tiger Reef Beach Bar & Grill, Swakopmund, Namibia

The 51st Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa was a great success, and our sincerest gratitude goes to the members of the local organizing committee Prof Quenton Wessels (chair), Dr. Adèle Du Plessis, Dr. Anneli Poolman, Mr. Jan van der Merwe, Mrs. Denisé Bouman and Mr. Marius van der Merwe, from the University of Namibia as well as all of those who attended. Our program was enriched by ground-breaking research and discussions along with the beautiful coastal background and activities offered by Namibia.

Cartoon strips

- Min Suk Chung

APICA in Okayama, Japan (March 17–19, 2027) (1/3) Min Suk CHUNG (anatomy.co.kr)

APICA is the abbreviation for the Asia Pacific International Congress of Anatomists.



APICA has been held in Asian and Pacific cities. Okayama congress is 12th.

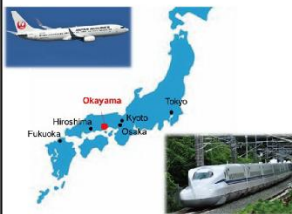
Seoul, Korea (1996)
Beijing, China (1999)
Hamamatsu, Japan (2002)
Kuşadası, Türkiye (2005)
Tehran, Iran (2008)
Surabaya, Indonesia (2011)
Singapore (2016)
Busan, Korea (2018)
Beijing, China (2020)*
Dunedin, NZ (2023)
Guangzhou, China (2025)
Okayama, Japan (2027)

(cancelled due to COVID*)

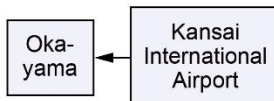
Anatomists from all over the world are warmly welcome to participate.



Foreign participants can reach Okayama either via Okayama International Airport



or via Kansai International Airport (Osaka).



It takes 2 hours to get to Okayama from Kansai International Airport. (Kansai is a region in Western Japan.)

APICA 2027 will be held together with JAA (Japanese Association of Anatomists) meeting.



In Japan, there are over 80 medical schools.

The joint meeting is expected to include about 1,200 participants.



250 oral presentations
450 poster presentations

Japan was the first Asian country to publish modern anatomy book in 1774.



New Book of Anatomy (Kaitai Shinsho, 解體新書)

For this book, anatomical terms in Chinese characters were created.

Nerve = 神經
(meaning mysterious route)

Even today, Japan, China, and Korea use many anatomical terms invented at that time.

APICA in Okayama, Japan (March 17–19, 2027) (2/3)

Min Suk CHUNG
(anatomy.co.kr)

In 1893, JAA was founded.

**Anatomical
Science
International**

JAA
official
journal

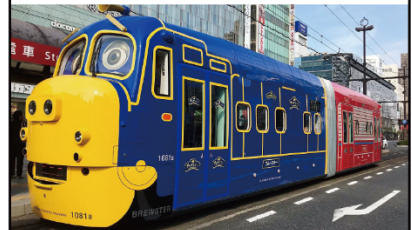
At APICA 2027, both traditional Japanese heritage (19th century) and modern Japanese challenge (21st century) can be experienced.

Build strong relationships with Japanese anatomists and scientists.



There have been 27 Japanese Nobel laureates in science.

Academic activities alone are not the only reason to visit Okayama.



Fun tram in Okayama

Okayama is a small, simple, and calm city.



There, you can feel generosity and kindness.

Another highlight is the local flavor.



Okayama is famous for seafood and fruits. Therefore, you will become a macrophage.

Do not miss traditional attractions such as the castle, garden, and shrine.



Everything is OKAY in OKAYama.

You can continue traveling to the nearby Kurashiki.



Exactly, Okayama City and Kurashiki City belong to Okayama Prefecture.

Or nearby Shikoku.



Shikoku is the fourth-largest island in Japan.

Otherwise, you can visit larger cities.



Great chance to explore Japan

Hopefully, you have heard about Osaka or Hiroshima.

Osaka and Hiroshima are the third- and eleventh-largest cities in Japan by population.



Osaka



Hiroshima

Okayama is connected to Osaka and Hiroshima by Shinkansen (bullet train).



It takes only 45 minutes in either direction.

In Japan, March is a very beautiful season.



The unforgettable cherry blossoms are expected.

Personally, I cannot forget the elegant spring in Hamamatsu where APICA 2002 and JAA meeting were held.



Traveling in Japan is safe.



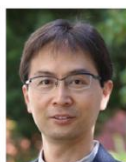
Japan is one of the few countries where beggars are rarely seen.

Moreover, the cost of living in Japan is currently reasonable.



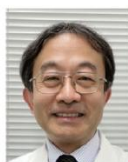
There are many reasons why Japan attracts foreign tourists.

The theme of APICA 2027 is "Synergy and Emergence."



Prof. Ikegami
(President of APICA 2027)

At APICA 2027, Synergy for the next generation will Emerge.



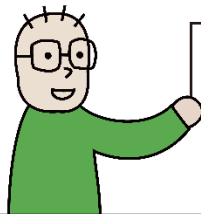
Prof. Nakajima
(President of JAA)

Explore APICA 2027 at kwcs.jp/apica2027.

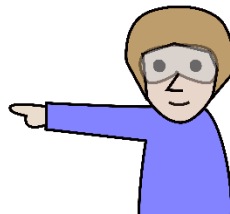


Just as students write down what they study, anatomists record what they research. RECORDs refer to papers submitted to Anat RECORD.

Just as musicians create RECORDs, anatomists produce RECORDs, which are papers published in Anat RECORD.



AR The Anatomical Record



Just as athletes gather strength to set RECORD, anatomists gather strength to build Anat RECORD.

Just as gamers enjoy Augmented Reality (AR), anatomists enjoy Anat Record (AR).

The Anatomical Record publishes new discoveries in the morphological aspects of evolutionary, molecular, cellular, and systems biology. The journal focuses on major new findings in functional morphology, paleontology, neurology, histology, and the anatomical consequences of gene disruption, activation, or over expression.

Upcoming event

Official Invitation: 54th Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA 2027)

The Division of Clinical Anatomy and the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University are honoured to co-host the 52nd Annual Conference of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa from Sunday 4 April to Wednesday 7 April 2027. The conference theme is "Anatomy in Dialogue."

The programme is designed to foster exchange between scientific investigation and artistic expression, highlighting the multidimensional nature of the anatomical sciences. The scientific programme will feature oral and poster presentations to showcase current research in areas of morphological and clinical anatomy, surgical anatomy, developmental biology, histology, ethics surrounding the use of human remains and innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the anatomical sciences. Key society events will include the Thompson Stibbe Lecture, plenary sessions and the President's Emergent Anatomist event. Social and networking events, including a welcome reception, student networking activities, and a formal gala dinner, will further foster engagement among delegates.

In keeping with the conference theme, an art exhibition to be held at Gallery of Stellenbosch University (GUS) and the opening of the interdisciplinary exhibition, *Uzizwa kanjani?* (How are you feeling?), thereby creating a platform for dialogue between anatomy, science, and artistic expression. The exhibition will explore how artistic interpretations of the human body can complement scientific understanding, highlighting the longstanding relationship between anatomical science and the visual arts while encouraging interdisciplinary reflection.

The Local Organising Committee looks forward to welcoming you to the Cape Winelands for this unique interdisciplinary event.

Prof Nanette Briers (briers@sun.ac.za)
(kathryns@sun.ac.za)

Conference chairperson

HOD: Division of Clinical Anatomy

Biomedical Research Institute
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Tygerberg Campus, Cape Town

Prof Kathryn Smith

Conference co-chairperson

Visual Arts Department

GUS committee chair, Director of VIZ.Lab
Faculty of Arts and social Sciences
Stellenbosch Campus