

# HEALTH MATTERS

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## New Regulations to the Health Professionals Act



The Health Professional Council (HPC) is glad to inform its registrants and readers of its newsletter that **new regulations have finally been promulgated**. The amendments, featured in the *Official Gazette* dated 14th January 2019, are aimed at catering for some of the lacunas of the previous provision to allow the Council to improve its processes.

The amendment has also **removed the title of Director Health Services** as one of the persons who should form part of the Council Board because the title was not in use within the Health Sector. This title has now been replaced by **Chief Allied Health Officer**.

### The new regulations introduced three (3) new fees:

1. A fee for processing application for registration as a Health Professional at SCR 300
2. A fee for registration or renewing registration at SCR 300
3. A fee for duplicate certificate at SCR100

*\*New Fees for Registration as at 26th December, 2018*

Furthermore, Schedule 1 of the Regulations has been amended to introduce new cadres, previously not featured, and remove cadres that should no longer appear on the list; For example:

**Removed:** Biomedical Technologist, Chemist, Health Statistician, Medical Imaging Technologist (Radiology Technologist), Oral Health Promotion Officer ...

**Added:** Diagnostic Radiographer, Dialysis Technician, Dietician, Pharmaceutical Chemist, Psychotherapist...

The Council, through its legal sub-committee, is presently working towards reviewing the *Health Professional Act 2006* to bring in new provisions, which will better respond to the needs of its registrants, its customers and the accomplishment of the Council's goals and targets.

HPC encourages all registrants to remain alert of current and for upcoming changes, and to share these information with colleagues and friends.



## What's Inside?

### Feature:

Allied Health Professionals working to support ECCE

-Page 2

### March Buzz:

World Hearing Day 2019

-Page 3

### Article:

Women in Allied Health Professions

-Page 4

### Highlights:

Lots of Socks Day

-Page 6

### FACTS:

Shedding lights on Autism

- Page 7

### Articles:

Health Long Service Award

- Page 8

### Spotlight:

HPC member attends PACA

- Page 9

## FEATURE

## Allied Health Professionals working to support ECCE

The recent International Biennial Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), held in Seychelles last February, reminded health professionals of the importance of the early years in childhood development. The early years (i.e. birth to 3) is one of the most critical stages in a child's life. It is a time of rapid brain growth and development, which is strongly influenced by factors such as genetics, the environment, nutrition, and the quality of social interaction received. Although ECCE includes children up to the age of eight (8), the care and attention given to a child in the earlier stages, particularly during the first three (3) years of life, will have a lifelong impact.

Learning is often perceived as an activity confined to a formal school environment. However, in the context of young children, postnatal learning begins the moment they are born. Good nutrition, proper health care, good quality stimulation and experiences as well as adequate emotional support are all important for effective learning to take place. Evidence has shown that children learn best through play as it involves exploration, language experimentation, cognition, emotional regulation and facilitates social skills development. Any form of play should be encouraged as it creates a multifaceted experience, which is further enhanced by adult's involvement. In this regard, parents, caregivers, teachers and others involved in the child's life should interact with the child as much as possible through play. Play is one of the most powerful ways to engage children and is highly recommended for the child's cognitive, emotional and social development.

Allied health workers play crucial roles in early learning during the early years, especially for children with special needs and/or with physical and intellectual disabilities, and their families. The management of each child varies based on their health conditions, current physical and cognitive abilities, and more importantly the involvement and commitment of their parents / caregivers. The overarching goal of early learning is to enable cognitive, social and emotional development for each child. The role for each professional differs but is complementary in ensuring the holistic growth and development of each child. For example, occupational therapists interact with children through play with the aim of improving the child's social interactions with others, and sensory and motor skills to ensure that they are able to undertake activities of daily living. A speech pathologist on the other hand, may also use play but focuses on improving a child's speech, language and communication development. At the same time, the dietician may assess a child's food intake to ensure that they are getting all the essential nutrients vital for the growing brain in the early years. There are many other allied health professionals working with children to ensure that the foundation is laid for lifelong learning.

The ECCE International Biennial Conference was held this year from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> February under the theme: '*Big data for small children: Monitoring Holistic early Childhood Development*'. Professionals from all government sectors including health, education, social, family affairs as well as the private sector were invited to participate in a series of presentations by experts from Seychelles and other countries. Allied health professionals who work with young children were invited to listen and share their experiences. In the first three days prior to the main conference, from the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> February, there were several presentations conducted on various topics, including best practices in the education sector in Singapore; and the services offered to children aged 1 to 8 years in different government sectors in Seychelles. But the presentation that elicited the most buzz was the one on the negative impact of screen time on children with examples from France. Rendezvous is in two years' time for another opportunity to share experience with other countries on ECCE practices.



## MARCH Buzz

# World Hearing Day 2019: Check your hearing

According to World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 466 million people worldwide live with disabling hearing loss, whilst a staggering portion live in low- and middle-income countries, often impeded by inaccessibility to desirable services and interventions (WHO, 2019). WHO reports that hearing loss left unattended is the primary cause of morbidity, costing the world \$750 billion annually; hence, the need for worldwide advocacy, awareness building and the need for urgent action.

In 2017, during the World Health Assembly, hearing loss and hearing care were presented and declared a public concern. It yielded the adoption of the resolution (WHA70.13) on prevention of deafness and hearing loss, which implored WHO and its Member States to lead **advocacy through World Hearing Day on 3rd March**. By answering that plea, World Hearing Day has become the largest global awareness campaign on ear and hearing care.

Until this present day, World Hearing Day aims to (1) **Promote public health actions** for ear and hearing care (2) **Stimulate inter-sectoral partnership** for ear and hearing care (3) **Raise awareness on hearing loss and care** at national and community levels across the world (4) **Encourage behaviour change** towards healthy ear and hearing practices.

Seychelles participated in this global campaign with short presentations and hearing screening on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue from the 27<sup>th</sup> February to 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2019. Similar activities and exercises will be conducted at other venues around the country throughout the year. Audiology unit alongside its committed partners look forward to this event every year, as they work to make a difference in the lives of people with hearing loss and hearing difficulties.

***“World Hearing Day is the ideal opportunity to spread the word and raise the profile of ear and hearing care in people’s mind, in the world’s media and on the global health agenda”***

(WHO, 2019, p.3).



### WHY 3 March?

**“3.3 resembles the shape of the two ears”.**

(WHO, 2019)





## ARTICLE

## Women in Allied Health Professions



Every year, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, the world observes International Women's Day. This year, Health Professionals Council (HPC) took time to reflect on Women in the Health Sector; more specifically in the Allied Health Professions.

Allied Health Professionals are members of the health care team and work at multiple points in the care pathway - from diagnosis, prevention, disease management to rehabilitation - in a variety of settings. Allied Health Professions comprise of non-Nurses and non-Doctors professionals (see table below). Its practices extend to the individual, the family, the community and to public education.

Acupuncture	Pharmacy	Health education	Physiotherapy
Audiology	Radiology	Occupational therapy	Prosthetics
Biomedical Engineering	Dentistry	Optometry	Public Health
Biomedical Science	Emergency Care	Psychology	Speech Pathology

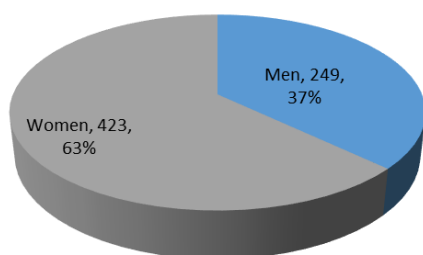
*\*Table showing the list of different cadres within HPC*

The Allied Health Professions have long been a female dominated cadre, be it in our local context as well as globally. Today, Seychellois women can be seen working alongside men in different cadres ranging from acupuncture to speech pathology, and far outnumber the male population in most categories of Allied Health Professions. One can then ask; why? Is

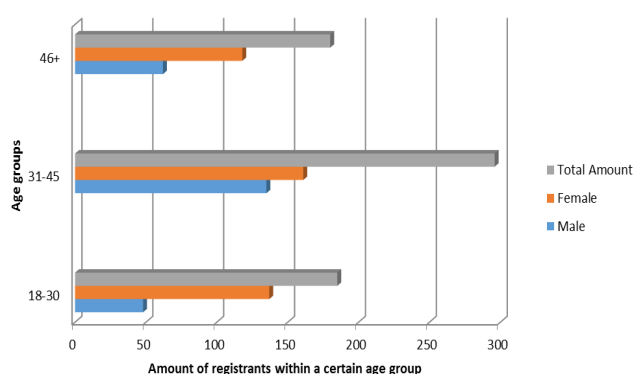
the attraction to these fields due to the caring instinct and nature of women as oppose to men? Or is it merely related to motherly figure? Whatever it is, the pattern and trend will remain with us for some time to come as more young females are choosing health as a career as compared to young males. Furthermore, today in Seychelles, women in Allied Health are holding key managerial positions as Directors / Managers of respective sections. Of the **10** main sections providing Allied Health Services within the Health Care Agency (HCA) and Public Health Authority (PHA), **seven (7)** are currently headed by women.



Allied Health



Amount of registrants separated by age groups

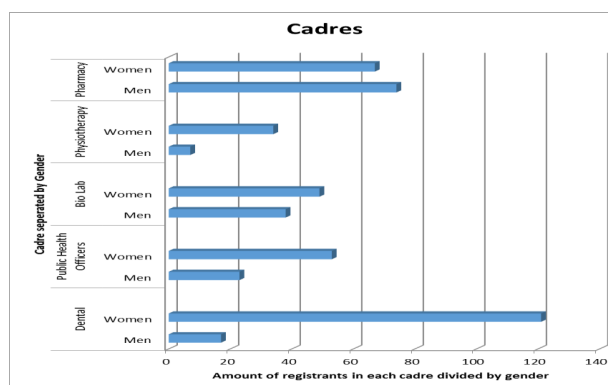


HPC decided to statistically analyze its registrants to investigate whether there are distinct patterns between its female and male registrants. HPC observed that amongst the total number of its registrants; **63%** were females as compared to **37%** males. The highest representation was in dental services, followed by pharmacy, where **121** and **67** women respectively, are currently employed.

Furthermore, when age was taken into consideration, more HPC registrants were noted to be women within the age group **18-30yo** (i.e. **137** as opposed to **48** men) and the age group **above 46yo** (i.e. **118** as opposed to **62** men). HPC registrants within the age group **31-45** were found to be close in number (i.e. **161** women versus **135** men).

This simple analysis and reflection suggest that there are more Seychellois women in the allied health professions as opposed to their male counterparts. While more work is needed to continue to advocate that women continue to join the allied health professions, more effort is equally needed to call upon the men to join such

professions so that these professions continue to grow; withstanding the test of time.



ADVERTS

**SAY Ahh**  
ACT ON MOUTH HEALTH

TAKE CARE OF  
YOUR ORAL  
HEALTH TO  
PROTECT  
YOUR MOUTH  
AND BODY.

#SayAhh  
#WOHD19

DENTAL CHECK-UP

The graphic features three hands against a blue background. The left hand holds a red apple, the middle hand holds a toothbrush, and the right hand holds a calendar card labeled 'DENTAL CHECK-UP'. A speech bubble in the top right corner contains the hashtag #SayAhh, and another speech bubble below it contains #WOHD19. The text 'SAY Ahh' is prominently displayed at the top left, with 'AhH' in a cursive font. Below it, 'ACT ON MOUTH HEALTH' is written in a yellow banner. The main message 'TAKE CARE OF YOUR ORAL HEALTH TO PROTECT YOUR MOUTH AND BODY.' is written in white capital letters on the left side.



5th May 2019

SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands

*"Clean care for all – it's in your hands"*

Washing hands saves lives.

Did you wash them?

Hand washing stops the spread of germs.

The graphic is divided into two main sections. The top section shows a large, realistic hand against a blue sky with clouds. A small figure of a person in a blue uniform is standing on a red ladder, cleaning the palm of the giant hand with a yellow sponge. The text 'Washing hands saves lives.' is written in a cursive font above the hand. The bottom section features a white background with six colorful handprints (purple, yellow, red, blue, orange, green) arranged in two rows. Between the rows, the text 'Did you wash them?' is written in bold. Below the bottom row of handprints, the text 'Hand washing stops the spread of germs.' is written in bold.



## HIGHLIGHT

Seychelles celebrates 1<sup>st</sup> “Lots of Socks Day” for World Down Syndrome Day

March 21<sup>st</sup> every year, is global awareness day for Down Syndrome, which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. The theme for this year, “*Leave No One Behind*”, was taken from the *2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development*; a global plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity.

This day is commemorated to help ensure that all people with Down Syndrome have opportunities to live fulfilling lives, and to be included on a full and equal basis, within their communities, across all aspects of society.

Down Syndrome, also known as Trisomy 21, is a genetic disorder, which results from the presence of a third copy of chromosome 21. This extra chromosome occurs by chance. As inverted pairs of socks look like chromosomes, socks have been selected to symbolically help raise awareness on this day. Additionally, the date 21<sup>st</sup> of the 3rd Month (or 21/3), symbolizes the “uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome, which results in Down syndrome.

Seychelles, for the first time this year, joined the rest of the world in the “Lots of Socks” activity, which is a fun initiative in the lead up to Down Syndrome Awareness Day. The activity was undertaken by a group of health professionals; members of the National Health Account (NHA) Team. Members showcased their coloured socks, brought from home, during tea break. All found this display very entertaining. Photos were taken, shared on social media and within minutes the team was congratulated by all who viewed their posts.

It was indeed an inspiring act from the NHA team. The team hopes to influence other professionals to join in similar activities in the coming year to intensify the effort in making Down Syndrome Awareness Day 2020 a significant event in Seychelles.



Pictures courtesy of **Mrs. Poris**

## FACTS...

## Shedding Light on Autism Spectrum Disorder!!!

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) remains a mystery to many. Experts in the field are effortlessly attempting to demystify ASD while they continue to find out more about this neurological condition. This exercise is important so that the general public becomes more understanding and aware to appreciate the difficulties that people living with ASD may face on a daily basis. Furthermore, it is anticipated that once ASD is better recognized, people living with ASD will be provided with the services they need to function optimally in their communities and societies as well as have better quality of life. Better understanding and increased awareness, hopefully will also help to reduce mistreatment, isolation, abuse and bullying.

### How much do you know about this disorder?

Below are the most common myths, misconceptions and facts about autism.

MYTH	FACT
Individuals with autism spectrum disorder avoid social contact.	Individuals with autism spectrum disorder are often keen to make friends but may find this difficult.
Individuals with autism spectrum disorder cannot lead independent and successful lives	Given appropriate education, many students with autism will grow up to be successful contributors to society.
Autism is the result of bad parenting.	There is clear evidence from research that autism is <b>not</b> caused by bad parenting but from a difference in the way the brain develops before the child is born.
All individuals with autism spectrum disorder have special talent or 'savant' skills.	It is estimated that 10% of individuals with autism spectrum disorder may have special abilities in areas like music, art, mathematical calculations, memory and manual dexterity. The majority however, may have areas of high performance that relate to their special interests or obsessions. These skills are often referred to as 'splinter skills', as they are often not consistent with skills in other areas of development.
Autism can be cured.	There is currently no documented cure for autism. Individuals with autism respond very well to structured <b>early intervention</b> , <b>education</b> and <b>vocational placements</b> that focus on the unique learning style of students with autism.
People with autism do not make eye contact.	When persons with autism feel relaxed and confident with the communication partner, eye contact can be quite spontaneous. It is NEVER a good idea to force a person with autism to have eye contact with you.
People with autism cannot talk.	Communication is more than talking. Some students with autism will develop speech seemingly effortlessly, but will require help to communicate appropriately with their peers. Others will require assistance to communicate their basic needs and wants, using a combination of words, gestures, and augmentative communication systems such as *PECS.
Autism can be outgrown.	Children do not 'outgrow' autism but symptoms may lessen or change as the child develops and receives <b>appropriate interventions</b> .
People with autism do not have feelings and thus are unable to show affection.	People with autism can and do give affection. However, due to differences in sensory processing and social understanding, the display of affection may appear different from typical people. Understanding and acceptance of these differences is the key.

\*PECS = Picture Exchange Communication System

Table adopted and adapted from: Autism Resource Centre (Singapore): <https://www.autism.org.sg/living-with-autism/myths-and-facts-of-autism>



## APRIL AFFAIRS

### Health Workers' Long Service Award Ceremony

Once again, as per tradition, the Ministry of Health (MOH) hosted its Long Service Award Ceremony (2019), where about a 100 health workers were honoured for their long services, commitment and loyalty to the Ministry. The event, held on the 5<sup>th</sup> April at the International Conference Centre Seychelles (ICCS), coincided with World Health Day observed on the 7<sup>th</sup> April each year. The ceremony was graced with the presence of the President of the Republic, Mr. Danny Faure, along with several other high state officials and guests.



Different talents and performances showcased by health workers themselves and friends of MOH brightened the ceremony, but the keynote address from the Ministry for Health, Mr. Jean Paul Adam, was one of the highlights of the event. Minister Adam recognized the importance of health professionals and the critical role they play in the health sector, labelling them true heroes,

whilst cautioning them to remain vigilant to new developments in the health sector. He notably congratulated them for their dedication and honourable contributions towards the health sector and for their long services.

Amongst the 100 awardees were a number of allied health professionals who have clocked between 25 to 40 years of service. Two other longstanding health workers were also recognized for having spent 44 years of their career life with the Ministry; Mr. Joachim Didon (Senior Health Statistician) and Mr. Nicholas Shamlaye (Director of Community Health Services – Public Health). Both joined the Ministry in 1974, and both were providentially awarded by President Faure.

HPC takes this opportunity to congratulate all the long service awardees and commends them for their hard work and dedication towards the health sector, whilst also acknowledging the work of many others in the field who are working tirelessly to drive the health sector ever forward.



**Congratulation to you all.**



*Pictures courtesy of Mr. Marguerite*



## SPOTLIGHT

## HPC MEMBER ATTENDS PACA CONFERENCE



Where: Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

When: April 25th–27th, 2019



Recently, one Health Professional Council (HPC) board member, Mrs. Catriona Monthy, was privileged to attend the **Pan African Congress on Autism (PACA)** conference held from the **25-27<sup>th</sup> April 2019** in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference was hosted under the theme **“Autism in Africa: debunking myths and stigma through Diagnosis, Education and Evidence Based Intervention, PACA 2019”** and was the first ever event of this magnitude in the African Region.

Pan African Congress on Autism (PACA) is the result of partnerships between different organizations, professionals, parents and people across Africa devoted to people diagnosed with Autism. This body is charged to assemble different African Organizations, across the Continent, who are working to improve the quality of life of people on the Autism Spectrum by generating and building awareness, advocating appropriate diagnosis, education, and early and ongoing interventions that are

guided by evidence. While these works are necessary to ensure higher recognition of Autism as a disability so people with autism living in Africa obtain resources and the financial support they need to lead better lives, PACA aims to be the existing body where all can come to access information and resources.

PACA 2019 saw the participation of representatives from 20 African countries as well as delegations from international organizations, such as Autism Speaks. Seychelles was represented by two members of Autism Seychelles; the Chairperson of the association, Mrs. Lyn Lavigne, and educational psychologist, Mrs. Catriona Monthy, who was supported by Autism Seychelles and the Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development to attend the conference.

Mrs. Monthy reported that the Conference was a very intensive and interesting experience, upon her return to Seychelles. She stated that while it is clear that there is still much to do in Seychelles in terms of providing high quality and timely services to individuals with autism and their families, many countries in Africa have even greater challenges given extreme poverty, remote locations, little government support, little awareness and understanding among professionals and the public, and high levels of stigma. She also shared that she had heard inspiring examples where services have been provided and significant impact has been made in spite of few human and material resources. One of the most powerful moments of the conference was when Abby, a young woman with autism from Kenya, shared her experiences. According to Mrs. Monthy, Abby explained that the words and phrases often used around autism, such as ‘disorder’, ‘disease’, ‘deficits’ and ‘behaviour problems’, can lead a person with autism to feel that there is something inherently wrong with them, which can damage their self-esteem. Mrs. Monthy said that Abby asked for people to accept differences, see the positives, and believe in people with autism.

Mrs. Monthy found PACA 2019 to be enriching, thought-provoking, and a productive platform for networking. She hopes that Seychelles will be well represented by professionals, parents, and self-advocates, at the next PACA conference, which is due to take place in April 2020.



Picture courtesy of Mrs. Monthy

***Autism is a neurological condition, which affects more boys than girls at a ratio of about 4:1. At present there is no cure but with appropriate strategies, interventions and support, people living with autism can lead fulfilling lives.***

## POSTER

Simulation of defective vision as experienced by a Diabetic whose vision has been affected by Diabetic retinopathy



Normal

Defective



Normal

Macular Degeneration



Normal vision

Early glaucoma

Advanced glaucoma

Extreme glaucoma



## Drive Safe... With Your Optometrist...

Do you know how well your VISION for driving is?  
How many years has he had a Driving License?

It would have been quite old. You admire his experience ....He has been doing his job for such a long time, which means you are in safe hands... He obtained his driving license in his twenties. Now, he is in his forties... You know he is careful... Peaceful on the road...

But don't forget...

By now, his field of vision...

His Macular... His Retina... His Vision...

His Colour Vision... His Contra Sensitivity... would not be the same as they were twenty years ago...

If he is developing **Cataract** ...

it must be very difficult for him to face the Glare....

...and also his colour vision may be poor. His Contra Sensitivity may be poor...

If his Eye Pressure is bad and he is developing **Glaucoma**...He may not have sufficient field of vision. He may not see the sides and edges properly...

If his **Sugar level** is bad. He might be getting blurred vision or dark spots within his visible area...

If his **Macular** is not healthy ...he might not be seeing the middle of his visual area OR he may not be seeing the world correctly...

Finally, if he has not updated his **Spectacles** or if he is not using the spectacles appropriate for driving....

You can decide how safe you are....

**Opt.Kumari Ratnayake**

Vision Infinity Eye Care

–Sri Lanka (Lanka Hospitals)

Pure Vision -Seychelles



## NOTICES

### CPD Point System

Since March 2019, HPC has introduced a CPD point system, which is currently being piloted.

Ensure that you are attending CPDs and recording your attendances. Attach your records and proof of your attendances to CPDs when renewing your registration for feedback.

If you require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact HPC Office.

It is your responsibility as an Allied Health Professional to ensure that your registration with the Health Professionals Council Seychelles is current and valid.

It is against Seychelles' law as an Allied Health Professional to practice without valid registration.

(Health Professionals Act 2006)

For more information on your registration status,

Visit our [online register](#)

or

Contact the HPC Registrar on

Tel: (+248) 4 303745 / 2 606128

Email: [registrarhpc@health.gov.sc](mailto:registrarhpc@health.gov.sc)



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