

ASSM Congress:

UNPRECEDENTED BOOST FOR SEXUAL MEDICINE IN REGION



The field of sexual medicine in South Africa received an unprecedented boost in late November when Durban was host to an array of internationally renowned visiting and well-known local authorities at the third biennial African Society for Sexual Medicine (ASSM) Congress.

Welcomed by convenor, Durban-based ASSM president Dr Prithy Ramlachan, the 150 delegates were treated to a broad spectrum of no less than 72 presentations ranging from clinical developments in areas such as the benefits of PDE5 inhibitors in Type 2 diabetes, the diagnosis of testosterone deficiency in men, and consultation considerations in dealing with sexual dysfunction through to HIV and

sexuality, sexuality, medicine and the law, as well as traditional Africa perspectives on sexual health and medicine.

A feature of the event was the ASSM Inaugural Abrie Schmidt Memorial Lecture by penile transplant pioneer and former Prof Schmidt student, University of Stellenbosch Associate Professor in Urology, Prof Andre van der Merwe, on "Penile Allograft Transplantation for Secondary Aphelia".

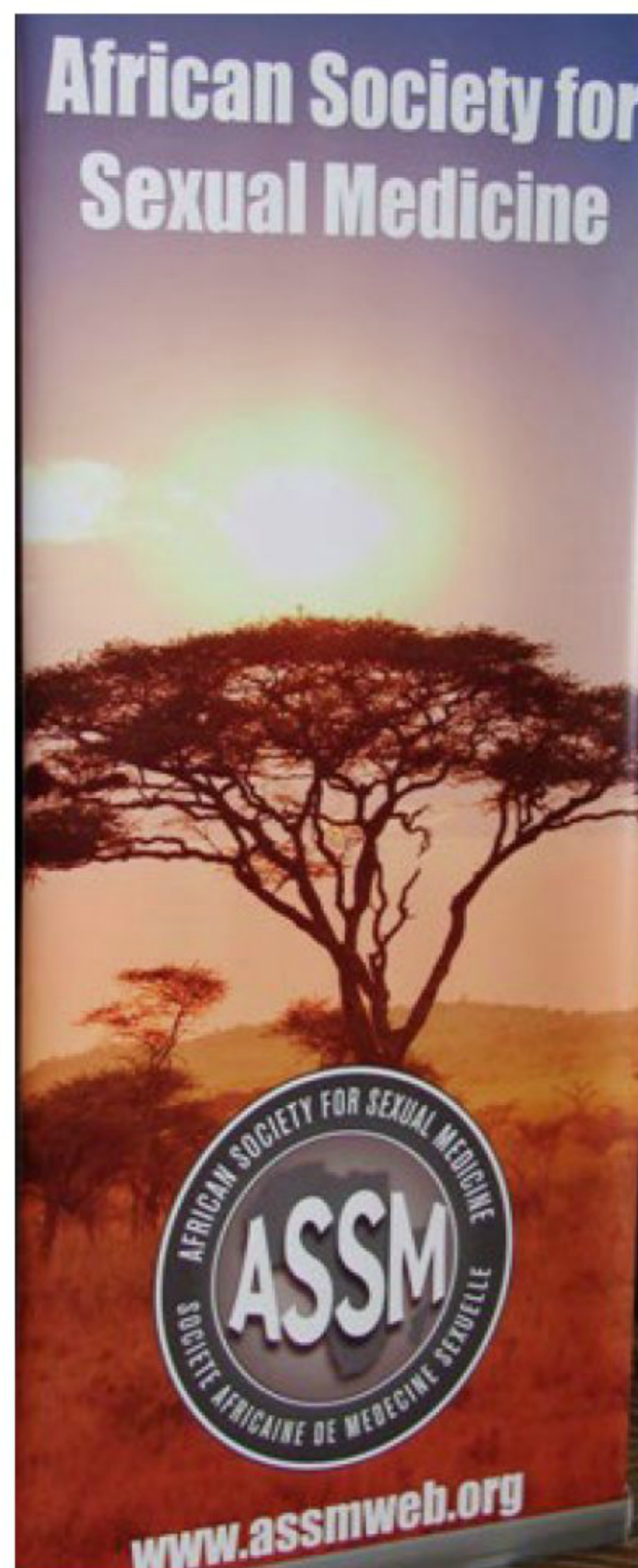
Paying tribute to Prof Schmidt, who was tragically killed in a car accident in the Eastern Cape earlier this year, Dr Ramlachan said he would always be remembered for his passion for sexual medicine particularly in the African context. He



Prof van der Merwe



Dr Ramlachan with ISSM president, Dr Wayne Hellstrom (USA)





was founder member of the African Society for Impotence Research, later the African Society for Sexual and Impotence Research and now the Africa Gulf Society for Sexual Medicine.

Notable among the visiting authorities was Dr Ronald Virag, French cardiovascular surgeon renowned for his invention of the first medical treatment for impotence. Specialising in andrology, he designed many of the modern diagnosis and treatment techniques for erectile dysfunction (ED), is credited for the development of the first intracavernous injection used to treat the disorder, and for the internationally acknowledged preventative programme for the harmful effects of ageing in the cardiovascular, hormonal, sexual, urologic and nutritional areas.

Dr Virag spoke on minimally invasive treatment of Peyronie's disease using platelet rich plasma and hyaluronic acid at the Durban event.

Sexuality and the cancer patient was dealt with at length mainly by Italy's Dr Francesca Tripodi, psychotherapist-sexologist at the Presso Institute of Clinical Sexology in Rome, and Prof Luca Incrocci, Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology and sexologist in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the Erasmus Cancer Institute in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

In her presentation Dr Tripodi dealt specifically with the impact of cancer on the



ASSM president Dr Prithy Ramlachan (left) with notable visiting authorities (from left) Dr Cobi Reisman (Netherlands), Prof Hartmut Porst (Germany), Prof Luca Incrocci (Netherlands) and Dr Francesca Tripodi (Italy)

sexuality of the partner: "Breast gone, prostate gone, potency gone – how can couples comply?" she asked.

In his take-home message after discussing medical aspects of cancer and sexual function, Prof Incrocci called for a multi-disciplinary approach in the management and treatment of these patients: "What we need to see," he said, "is more talking about sex to oncologists and about cancer to sexologists."

**More in-depth reports on selected ASSM Congress presentations will be featured in the next issue (February)*



Prof Virag with session chair, Pretoria sexology Practitioner, Dr Elna Rudolph



Multiple presenter Prof Geoffrey Hackett, visiting professor in Men's Health at Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire University and member of the scientific committee of the International Society for Sexual Medicine, discusses lifestyle interventions in sexual medicine while French sexual and male reproductive expert, Dr Beatrice Cuzin, looks on



Prof Nceba Gqaleni, member of the Interim Traditional Health Practitioners Council of SA, leads the discussion on African perspectives of sexual health and medicine