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UCT's Dr Hendricks appointed youngest president of SA Sports Medicine Association



Dr Sharief Hendricks

Photo: Je'nine May

University of Cape Town's (UCT) Dr Sharief Hendricks has been appointed president of the South African Sports Medicine Association (SASMA) – the first non-sports physician to hold the two-year post.

To fulfil his mission, the senior lecture in the Division of Physiological Sciences in the Department has set out three pillars that will underpin his time at the helm: transformation, creating a sustainable ecosystem, and giving community work the attention it deserves. South Africans are well recognised as leaders in the field of sports medicine and exercise science, said Hendricks.

UCT in particular is ranked 49th in the world, according to the [Shanghai 2022 Global Ranking of Sport Science Schools and Departments](#).

“Leading SASMA is an honour and privilege. I’m the youngest and first non-physician to be president, and what this represents is the bridging of the gap between the clinician and research in sports medicine.”

Hendricks has contributed significantly to the field of sports medicine and exercise science, with over 100 high-impact publications. He currently acts as a consultant for World Rugby, the South African Cricketers’ Association (SACA), the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC), and the South African Rugby Union (SARU).

Strong network

He is also a visiting professor at Leeds Beckett University in the UK, and collaborates with universities in England, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

“We are on a transformation path, and my goal is to implement strategies to facilitate our walk along this path – like a travelator at airports.

Also, sports medicine in South Africa is largely enjoyed by elite sports teams, and we can do more to take it to our disadvantaged communities – not only in terms of practice, but also to hopefully inspire more youth to pursue a career in medicine and science in sport,” said Hendricks.

“Within SASMA, we have global leaders who are locally based and a strong network of international colleagues, which we need to tap into to pave the way for the next SASMA generation,” he explained. SASMA also has a journal linked to it, *The South African Journal of Sports Medicine*, which creates a training ground for young aspiring sports medicine and science researchers.

‘Chop wood, carry water’

Hendricks has received notable recognition for his work – as the UCT Young Researcher Award winner in 2019; a three-time finalist for the TW Kambule-NSTF Award (National Science and Technology Forum, an award for the top scientist in the country); and as a fellow of the European College of Sport Science for significant contribution to the field, among others.

Recently, his contribution to the field was also featured in a service spotlight article in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, the top journal sports medicine (IF 18.47).

Titled “‘Chop wood, carry water’ Dr Sharief Hendricks: an inspirational story of an impactful South African sports scientist”, – the article encourages young scientists to do the everyday, irrespective of the outcome.

Hendricks was also one of the 2019 *Mail & Guardian* Top 200 Young South Africans and is currently part of two professoriate fellowships – the South Africa Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation's Future Professors Programme Fellowship and the UCT Next Generation Professoriate Fellowship.

Hendricks credits several reasons for the work he’s done and the work he will continue to do in the field of sports medicine and science.

Story by Kamva Somdyala, UCT News.

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