The Bursary Committee of the SA Medical Association is proud to announce that the PhD Scholarship applications process was successfully completed at the end of 2013 and scholarships have been awarded. The successful candidates receiving PhD scholarships in 2014 are Dr A Bekker and Dr K Donald.

Dr Adrie Bekker

Dr Bekker completed her medical degree in 1997 at the University of the Free State, her MMed (Paeds) at the Stellenbosch University in 2005 and was awarded her Certificate in Neonatology from the College of Medicine in 2008. She was also awarded a fellowship in Neonatology in Belgium in 2005 and a mini-fellowship in paediatric infectious diseases in Colorado, USA in 2010.

The main purpose of her PhD is to comprehensively address strategies to prevent and treat perinatal and infant TB in the context of maternal HIV infection.

She has published three first author research articles towards her doctorate:
- High tuberculosis exposure among neonates in a high tuberculosis and human immunodeficiency virus burden setting, published in the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease on 1 August 2012;
- Determinants of tuberculosis treatment completion among newborns in a high-burden setting, published in the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease in March 2014 and;

She has also been co-author in several peer-reviewed journals and has recently been awarded three PhD scholarships: the Discovery Academic Award, the MRC Clinician Researcher PhD Programme and the SAMA PhD Scholarship.

Dr Kirsty Donald

The second PhD candidate for 2014 is Dr Kirsty Donald and she received her MBChB from the University of Cape Town, also in 1997. She obtained higher specialist training in paediatrics by completing her MRCPCH in the UK in 2003 and did her FCPaed in South Africa in 2006. She completed her Certificate in Paediatric Neurology in 2009 and her MPhil on intellectual and behavioural functioning in a South African cohort of boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

Her PhD project is focused on multi-modal neuro-imaging techniques in infants who have been exposed to methamphetamine and/or alcohol antenatally and their neuro-cognitive correlates.

She is the first author of papers on Cerebral Palsy in Africa and on the Neurological complications of HIV in Seminars on Paediatric Neurology, 2014 and co-author of many publications, including a chapter in the Handbook of Paediatrics for developing countries (Oxford University Press Southern Africa, Cape Town, 2010).

Progress reports from the 2013 recipients of SAMA PhD supplementary scholarships

The required progress reports were received from the recipients of the 2013 PhD Supplementary Scholarships, Dr AE Theron and Dr K Outhoff. Both the candidates’ projects entailed studies on various elements of breast cancer.

Dr Theron wrote: “I thank the SAMA for the support and funding over 2013, and am grateful for the research progress that the funds have enabled me to achieve.”

Dr Outhoff stated that “without the scholarship, it would not be possible to carry out these repeats, and I remain eternally grateful...”

We wish them both only success for the remaining parts of their projects and their future careers.

SAMA PhD Supplementary Scholarship

The SA Medical Association wishes to encourage postgraduate research, specifically with a view to promoting research and development in the medical field in South Africa.

SAMA is therefore proud to offer the SAMA PhD Supplementary Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded on merit to the successful applicant who must be a South African citizen and a graduate of any university in South Africa who has started their PhD study within one year of application for this scholarship.

The successful applicant will receive a stip-end of R100 000 as well as one year’s tuition fees.

The application must contain the following:
- Completed application form together with a passport size photograph;
- Abbreviated Curriculum vitae (max of two pages);
- Letter of intent (explaining motives for applying);
- Proof of registration with academic institution;
- Title of project and short abstract of your research project (approx 500 words);
- Brief outline of the methodology you will use (including a budget if possible); and
- Letter of recommendation by two supervisors.

Applications will only be received between 1 August and 30 September each year and must be addressed to:

The SAMA Bursary Committee
P O Box 74789
Lynnwood Ridge
0040
or email: karlienp@samedical.org