CEPSA
NEWSLETTER #3
August 2026

CEPSA
Centre of Excellence for Pharmacovigilance in Southern Africa

A message from the editorial team

A fresh new look!

Dear Colleagues,

The Centre of Excellence for Pharmacovigilance in Southern Africa (CEPSA) team is pleased to share with you our third quarterly newsletter, and this time with a new layout. We hope our refreshed design is more visually appealing and engaging to everyone, as we would love to feature more content from our Community of Practice (CoP).

We therefore warmly encourage you to share your updates, achievements, and requests for support with us at cepsa@uwc.ac.za so that we can feature them in upcoming editions.

At CEPSA, we continue to uphold our commitment to identify, compile and circulate updates on recent developments in Pharmacovigilance (PV), CEPSA activities, and the contributions, initiatives, and publications of our esteemed CoP.

Please feel free to circulate this newsletter within your professional networks. We would also like to remind you that the CoP is open and inclusive; your colleagues and peers are welcome to join. Registration can be requested by emailing cepsa@uwc.ac.za.

We hope you enjoy this edition.

Warm regards,
The CEPSA team

What is CEPSA's Community of Practice (CoP)?

The CoP was established following the successful inaugural edition of CEPSA's flagship PV Training, held in November 2025 in Cape Town, and organised in close collaboration with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).
The CoP is a network of excellence between and by PV experts in Africa. Beyond facilitating communication, and exchange among members and their wider networks, the CoP constitutes the foundational pillar for CEPSA's activities, which include new PV training editions, research activities, and support in the field of risk communication and policy-making.
Being a member of the CoP, you play a key role as an ambassador for the Centre of Excellence!

Newsletter highlights

CEPSA hosted its first webinar titled: Risk Communication in Pharmacovigilance: Lessons from Vaccine Safety Communication in a Complex Information Environment

CEPSA is pleased to share its first webinar, titled Risk Communication in Pharmacovigilance: Lessons from Vaccine Safety Communication in a Complex Information Environment. Two key speakers, Priya Bahri and Prof. Hannelie Meyer, shared insightful and practical PV communication strategies. Priya Bahri, from EMA's Lead PV and Risk Management Guidance and Policy, shared how medicinal product-specific media monitoring can improve proactive regulatory communication by identifying public information needs in real time, particularly for medicines of high public interest. Translating media content into scientific-regulatory language supports effective dialogue and preparedness. Communication should incorporate risk assessment, evaluation, transparency, clear messaging, precautionary guidance, and be tailored to target audiences, including patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the general public. Prof. Hannelie Meyer, Professor in Pharmacy at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) provided new insight on how communication plays a key role in shaping vaccine attitudes, as scientific evidence alone is often insufficient to change behaviour. Healthcare professionals can encourage vaccination by emphasising its benefits, while regulators should support patient-centred communication. Effective messages should build trust, address risk perception, and come from credible, trusted sources.

The recording is available upon request by sending an email to cepsa@uwc.ac.za

From SPaRCS to CEPSA: A Legacy of Collaboration

We are delighted to celebrate the first publication of the Strengthening Pharmacovigilance and Regulatory Capacities in Southern Africa (SPaRCS) project manuscript in Frontiers in Drug Safety and Regulation. This publication tells the story of how a shared vision and strong regional partnerships laid the foundation for the Centre of Excellence for Pharmacovigilance in Southern Africa (CEPSA).

Launched in 2020, SPaRCS united academic institutions, national regulatory authorities and pharmacovigilance centres from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Eswatini to strengthen pharmacovigilance systems and clinical trials oversight through collaboration, mutual learning and capacity building. Over three and a half years, the project fostered trusted relationships, shared expertise and developed practical solutions to common medicine safety challenges across the region.

The success of SPaRCS demonstrated the power of regional collaboration and contributed to the establishment of CEPSA in 2024. Today, CEPSA builds on this legacy by expanding partnerships, advancing collaborative research and training, and strengthening pharmacovigilance capacity across Southern Africa and the African continent.

We congratulate all SPaRCS partners on this important publication and look forward to the next chapter as CEPSA continues to promote excellence in pharmacovigilance and medicine safety throughout the region and continent. See more under scientific publications or read the full article here.

SPaRCS
Strengthening Pharmacovigilance and Regulatory Capacities in four Southern African countries

Update on CEPSA's attendance at the ISoP Africa Chapter Meeting, 18 – 21 May 2026, Windhoek, Namibia

In our March 2026 Newsletter, we indicated that CEPSA would attend and present at the ISoP Africa Chapter Meeting. Indeed, CEPSA delivered two podium presentations: "Building a Sustainable Pharmacovigilance Ecosystem in Africa: Achievements and Future Directions of the Centre of Excellence for Pharmacovigilance in Southern Africa (CEPSA)'' by Dr Nicolas Praet and "Mapping Pharmacovigilance Capacity in Southern Africa: Preliminary Findings from a Survey to Inform Targeted Pharmacovigilance Capacity Strengthening'' by Dr Ebenezer Wiafe.

CEPSA, through Dr Ebenezer Wiafe, Dr Nicolas Praet and Dr Hazel Bradley, engaged key pharmacovigilance stakeholders from several national regulatory authorities, including Ghana FDA, the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe, Botswana Medicines Regulatory Authority and the Therapeutics Information and Pharmacovigilance Centre (TIPC) of the Namibia Medicines Regulatory Council, as well as colleagues from the African Medicines Agency, the Uppsala Monitoring Centre, academia and the pharmaceutical industry. The CEPSA delegation met some alumni from the first CEPSA workshop and used the opportunity to visit the School of Pharmacy (Department of Pharmacy Practice) at the University of Namibia.

More information can be found here

WHO launches first global framework to help regulators advance greener pharmaceuticals
New framework outlines practical actions for regulators to reduce the climate footprint of medicines while safeguarding quality, safety, efficacy and equitable access

Health systems account for around 5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, with pharmaceutical products contributing an important share of that footprint through their lifecycle. The World Health Organization (WHO) launched the first global framework to help medicines regulators accelerate the transition towards greener pharmaceuticals without compromising quality, safety, efficacy or equitable access on 26 July 2026. The framework builds on WHO's Greener pharmaceuticals' regulatory highway call to action, launched in 2024, and reflects a comprehensive process of evidence gathering and consultation with regulatory authorities, manufacturers, international organizations, standards-setting bodies and technical experts worldwide to lower-carbon technologies while continuing to protect patients. Recognizing that many of the solutions needed to decarbonize pharmaceutical value chains already exist, the framework focuses on creating the regulatory conditions needed to enable their wider and more consistent adoption without creating delays, fragmented requirements or barriers to access. The framework proposes action across three interconnected pillars: Awareness and capacity building for climate literacy, recognised international guidance, tools and standards and innovation and innovative regulatory pathways implemented by authorities. Read more here

If you would like to have your work featured in an upcoming issue, we encourage you to submit your content to cepsa@uwc.ac.za for consideration.

When medicines are made outside the factory: Why pharmacovigilance matters more than ever

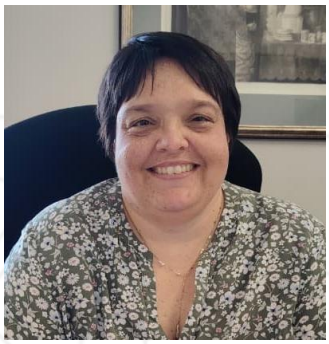
We are pleased to announce CEPSA's publication featured in the Spotlight, titled *When medicines are made outside the factory: Why pharmacovigilance matters more than ever* by Professor Renier Coetzee and Lara van Niekerk. For many, the efforts of PV and role PV plays in healthcare go unnoticed. PV is often taken for granted; however, its absence would have significant and noticeable consequences. The recent court proceedings involving Pretoria-based compounding pharmacy, iDexis, have generated considerable public interest. Much of the discussion has focused on access to medicines, intellectual property, regulatory authority and the growing demand for medicines containing semaglutide, such as Ozempic. This has shed the light on the role and importance of pharmacovigilance that was previously unknown to the public. Read the full text here

Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ), attain the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Benchmarking Maturity Level 4 status

Dr Mohammed Yakub Janabi, the African Regional Director for WHO, announced the MCAZ reached the WHO Global Benchmarking Maturity Level 4, placing the country among the world's top-performing regulatory authorities for medical products. MCAZ held meetings to address and improve the regulatory functions across critical areas, including marketing authorization (MA), pharmacovigilance (VL), market control (MC), licensing of establishments (LI), regulatory inspections (RI), laboratory testing (LT), and clinical trials oversight (CT). Level 4 is the highest attainable level, and represents a regulatory authority with advanced systems and consistency, ensuring the safety, quality and efficacy of medical products. We congratulate Dr Priscilla Nyambayo (Head of Pharmacovigilance & Clinical Trials Division) and the MCAZ team. Read more here

New to CEPSA

We would like to introduce the latest CEPSA members, Riana Dippenaar and Lara van Niekerk. You can find them in the CEPSA office, School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape.



We encourage your colleagues and peers to join the CoP. Registration can be requested by emailing cepsa@uwc.ac.za

Scientific publications

This section highlights recent publications by, or of interest to, CoP members. The selection is not based on a systematic review. Members are encouraged to apply their own critical appraisal when consulting these publications.

Strengthening pharmacovigilance and regulatory capacity in Southern Africa (SPaRCS): achievements, experiences and lessons learned from a participatory action learning project.
Viljoen, M., Khoza, S., Dheda, M., Chirinda, L., Shigwedha, F., Shimbulu, A., Nhlabatsi, S., Shongwe, N., Figueras, A., Ravinetto, R., & Bradley, H. 2026. Frontiers in drug safety and regulation, 6, 1765077. https://doi.org/10.3389/fdsfr.2026.1765077

Probable Loa loa-associated encephalopathy following ivermectin administration in a patient with malaria infection: A case report from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Posite, C. M., Findama, J. K., Vwiravwahali, M. K., Molo, I. M., & Bunduki, G. K. 2026. IDCases, 44, e02566. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.idcr.2026.e02566

Performance of active drug safety monitoring and management for pharmacovigilance strengthening in Ethiopia, experience from a multidrug-resistant tuberculosis management program: a cross-sectional study.
Achalu DL, Meshesha SG, Kiltu AB, et al. 2026. BMJ Open 2026;16:e108251. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2025-108251 https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/16/5/e108251

The Burden of Adverse Drug Reactions in Africa in the Context of Pharmacogenetics-Based Clinical Guidelines.
Scholefield J, Mazhindu TA, Nagy M, Twesigomwe D, Agesa G, Masimirembwa C.
Clin Pharmacol Ther. 2026, May;119(5):1382-1390. doi: 10.1002/cpt.70269. Epub 2026 Apr 3. PMID: 41932844;
PMCID: PMC13083364. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpt.70269

Safety monitoring of the RTS,S/AS01E malaria vaccine: experiences and lessons from routine pharmacovigilance in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi
Ashie, A., Mandale, M., Ndalama, A., Darko, D., Seaneke, S., Boateng, E. K., Sabblah, G., Asamoa-Amoakohene, A., Amponsa-Achiano, K., Mohammed, N. T., Jalang'o, R., Nkansah, E., Adu-Boahen, Y., Siyoi, F., Toroitich, A., Khaemba, C., Nambwa, P., Jain, S., Okine, R. N. A., & Mssusa, A. K. 2026. Malaria journal, 25(1), 197. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12936-026-05889-x

Knowledge, perceptions, and practices of healthcare workers on surveillance of adverse events following maternal immunisation in South Africa
Mehta, U. C., Gomba, Y., Salie, I., Welte, A., Pillay, N., Dahlke, M., Morof, D., Sekiti, V., & Meyer, J. C. May 2026. doi: 10.1016/j.vaccine.2026.128557.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2026.128557

Upcoming events

CEPSA's Second PV Training Workshop

CEPSA marked a major milestone with its first pharmacovigilance workshop hosted last year, 2025. This year, CEPSA will be hosting its annual training workshop from 30 August – 4 September 2026 at the School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape campus.

A primary objective of ISoP is to promote the safest use of drugs through contributing to appropriate education in pharmacovigilance (PV) and training activities worldwide. This training workshop brings experts from across Africa together to strengthen PV capacity through immersive, hands-on training. **Please share your highlights and experiences from this workshop, we would love to hear from you!**

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The 18th World Congress on Public Health takes place on 6-9 September 2026 in Cape Town

Organized by the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) and the Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA), this prestigious event will unite public health professionals, policymakers, and advocates worldwide to address the most pressing global health challenges.

Join us in the vibrant city of Cape Town, famous for its multicultural heritage, symbolising resilience and hope. The congress will highlight Health Without Borders: Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability; and serve as a platform for groundbreaking ideas pushing the boundaries of public health.

Please note that CEPSA Team members will attend and present during this event. We hope to meet you there!

For more information visit: https://www.wfpha.org/world-congress-on-public-health/

18TH WORLD CONGRESS ON PUBLIC HEALTH
2026 September 6-9 CAPE TOWN

ISoP 2026 Global Meeting

This year the International Society of Pharmacovigilance (ISoP) Global Meeting wild be held in San José, Costa Rica on September 22-25, under the theme: "Ecosystems of Trust: Pharmacovigilance for a Healthier World". This milestone meeting will bring together global experts, regulators, industry leaders, academics, healthcare professionals, and patients to advance medicines safety worldwide (text extracted from the ISoP webpage). **Please share you highlights from this meeting with us so we can feature them in the next Newsletter!** For more information visit: https://www.isop2026costarica.org/

ISoP 25th GLOBAL MEETING
San José, Costa Rica 2026