

# Lack of Professional Neuropsychological Training in South Africa Impedes Diagnosis, Treatment and Compensation for Brain-Compromised Patients

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# Emerging Diagnoses of Brain Diseases/Injuries



DEVELOPMENTAL



TRAUMA



NEUROLOGICAL  
DISEASE

# Increased Medical Burden in SA

- ▶ Trauma: MVA, Falls or Violence
- ▶ Age Spectrum
- ▶ Medical sophistication of diagnoses
- ▶ Increasing incidence across categories
- ▶ Medical specialization: Neurologists (e.g., Epilepsy; CVA etc.)



# Psychological Training to Date

Generic

Short period

Variable  
types of  
preparation

Diverse  
needs of  
society

# Increasing Burden of CNS-related Disease

- ▶ Head trauma very high in South Africa due to:

MVAs

Interpersonal  
Violence

Falls/Sporting

Infections

Aging

Developmental  
Problems

# Current Categories of Psychology: Inadequate Preparation: Why?



Basic foundations of CNS and human behaviour not compulsory

Emerging trends of diagnostic models such as DSM weight biological processes

Neuropsychology affords opportunity to provide cutting edge, 21st Century diagnosis and treatment

Age spectrum demands neurological knowledge of life-span development

# Pathology in CNS Diseases/Trauma

Differential patterns



Prenatal problems leading to childhood difficulties such as ADHD



Each disease has common and variable patterns



Evolving or static lesions

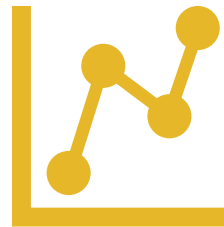


Psychological and behavioural outcomes

# Understand different Radiological Methods



Understanding  
scans



Differentiating types  
of scans and data



Limitations of scans



# Issues of Compensation

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MVA outcomes

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Claimants are heavily favoured according to demographics

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Use of inappropriate sciences to determine compensation

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Use of gross and insensitive psychological measures

# Medication Monitoring



Seizures



Psychotropic  
medication

# Predicting Outcome of Neurosurgical Interventions

Critical areas of brain

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graph TD; A[Critical areas of brain] --> B[Preserved function]; B --> C[Compromised function]; C --> D[Outcomes determine education, work];
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The diagram consists of four horizontal bars arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top-left to bottom-right. Each bar is connected to the one below it by a downward-pointing arrow. The bars are colored as follows: orange, yellow, green, and teal. The text on each bar is white.

Preserved function

Compromised function

Outcomes determine education, work

# Neuropsychological Training in SA

No formal neuropsychological training for all aspects of CNS problems

Training has been at a theoretical level

Practitioners lack direct experiences combined with appreciation of existing literature

Mentorships from experienced, neuropsychologists trained at advanced level not using Western-based models.

# Differences from Traditional Psychological Training

Traditional—relies on patient responses, reflection and cooperation

Neuropsychologists have more active engagement

Not necessarily time-based—dependent on nature of presenting patient

# Why not 21<sup>st</sup> Century Neuropsychology for South Africans

21<sup>st</sup> century: South African citizens have more than primary health-care needs.

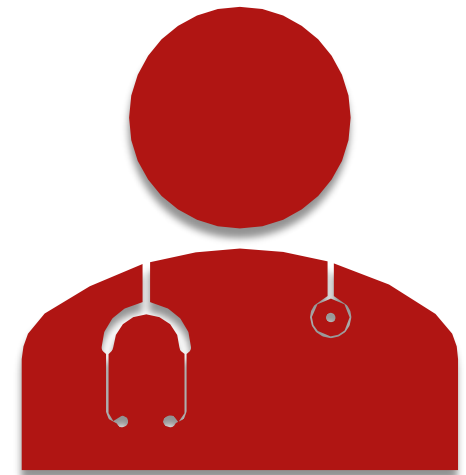
Neuropsychologists provide opportunity for diagnosis of neurologically-based syndromes

Neuropsychologists provide opportunity for real-life, outcome-based interventions that are practical.

Neurological conditions impact individuals, families and ultimately societies

# Urgent Recommendations: Independent Board? NHI

- ▶ From first year--applied biological, microbiological, pharmacological data relating to CNS functioning and neuropsychological accompaniments.
- ▶ Parallel general medical practitioner training-focused on behavioural and psychological outcomes
- ▶ Foundation for prescribing medications.



# HPCSA Act 56 of 1974:

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Established to regulate health care needs of South African Population.

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Chapter 1: Section 15: Establishment of professional boards:

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(1) The Minister shall, on the recommendation of the council, establish a professional board with regard to any health profession in respect of which a register is kept in terms of this Act, or with regard to two or more such health professions” (p.20).



# Window of Opportunity!!

- ▶ Use this conference to initiate processes to start an independent Board of Neuropsychological Practitioners Appropriate for **ALL** South African



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!!!

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