

## Materials science and manufacturing

### **Biomaterials in the spotlight**

Biomaterials-Africa 2009, taking place from 20 to 22 September at the CSIR International Convention Centre, will be the first of its kind and, it is believed, of many more to come.

The conference is being hosted by the Biomaterials Association of South Africa (BioMatASA) with the theme of 'Advancing biomaterials in Africa'. "Through the conference, we hope to advance biomaterials research in South Africa and the rest of Africa as well as to foster and develop national and international multidisciplinary collaborations and networks. Issues pertinent to the continent will be addressed and highlighted," explains Avashnee Chetty, the conference's organisational chair.

Biomaterials have been instrumental in increasing human life expectancy and improving quality of life. The Biomaterials-Africa 2009 conference will showcase the latest technological innovations and research developments in the biomaterials field in Africa as well as present the latest global trends.

Sub-themes for the conference include:

- Biomaterials, including bioceramics, biopolymers and biometals
- Drug delivery systems
- Nano-enabled biomaterials
- Regenerative tissue engineering
- Stem cells
- Medical devices
- Biomechanics.

"This conference promises to bring together both national and international experts in the biomaterials field," says Chetty. "Attendees can expect a cutting-edge scientific programme focusing on some of the key biomaterials areas, with an interesting line-up of world-renowned speakers."

Plenary speakers include Professor Shuguang Zhang (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Professor Tatsuya Shimizu (Tokyo Women's Medical University) and Professor Ugo Ripamonti, MRC/University of Witwatersrand. They are experts in tissue engineering, regenerative medicine and bone tissue engineering respectively.

Confirmed keynote speakers include Professor Michael Pepper, University of Pretoria; Dr John Ramshaw, CSIRO-Australia; Naseem Theilgaard, Danish Technological Institute; Dr Hala Zreiqat, University of Sydney, Australia; Professor William Murphy, University of Wisconsin, USA; and Professor Mona Marei, University of Alexandria, Egypt. In addition, 18 papers and 30 posters will be presented.

A half-day Biomaterials Course is planned for the morning of 23 September, following the conference. This event will be separate from the conference and people not attending the conference will still be able to register. The course will comprise lectures by Professor Shuguang Zhang; Professor Danie Burger, University of Pretoria; Dr Wim Richter, CSIR; and Dr Deon Bezuidenhout, University of Cape Town.

Visit the [conference web site](#) for more information.

- Kelly-Anne Matthews

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