

# SAMA MEDIA STATEMENT



## DANGERS OF FAKE MEDICAL DOCTORS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A GROWING CONCERN

10 October 2023

The SA Medical Association (SAMA) is deeply concerned about the significant risks that fake doctors pose to public health and safety. Recent incidents on social media have brought to light the alarming prevalence of individuals falsely representing themselves as qualified medical professionals, endangering the well-being of unsuspecting patients. The recent case of a social media influencer “doctor” has been speedily disputed by both the university institution and the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA).

Fake doctors peddling their practices is a growing concern for SAMA. As recent as June 2023 reports of fake doctors lead to the arrest of 124 individuals through a crackdown by the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA). This practice undermines the trust and integrity of the healthcare system, in addition to jeopardising the health of those who seek care. They operate without the necessary qualifications, registrations, and ethical standards, potentially causing harm through misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatments, and unregulated procedures. These actions not only lead to physical harm but also emotional and financial distress for the affected individuals and their families. The presence of fake medical practitioners erodes public trust in the healthcare system. People may become reluctant to seek medical care, even when they genuinely need it, due to fear of encountering fraudulent practitioners.

Though the number of fake doctors is low in comparison to the general doctor population, the impact on patients' lives is of grave concern to the association. It is essential to prioritise one's health and safety by seeking care from reputable, registered healthcare professionals. SAMA calls upon the public to be vigilant and cautious when seeking medical advice or treatment, and to verify a medical doctor's credentials by searching for the doctor in the HPCSA iRegister on the HPCSA website or by calling the HPCSA call centre on 012 338 9300/1. Fake doctors can also be reported via email to [inspectorateoffice@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:inspectorateoffice@hpcsa.co.za)

(ENDS)

### **Notes to Editors**

About SAMA: The South African Medical Association (“SAMA”) was established in 1927 and became known as it is today through the unification of a variety of doctors’ groups on 21 May 1998 that had represented a diversity of interests. SAMA is a non-statutory, professional association for public and private sector medical practitioners. SAMA is registered a non-profit company in terms of the Companies Act. SAMA is a voluntary membership association, existing to serve the best interests and needs of its members in all healthcare-related matters.

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