

Looking forward - and calling for your help!

In the very first issue of the *South African Journal of Child Health* (SAJCH) in March 2007 we attempted to justify starting yet another medical journal to join the plethora of world medical literature. In a country where children constitute the majority of our population of over 40 million, the lack of a peer-reviewed paediatrics journal was long overdue. Most people would not argue against the need for peer-reviewed journals to publish high-quality manuscripts that not only report and stimulate original research but ultimately improve patient care. Continuing professional development appears to be '... effective at the acquisition and retention of knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviours and clinical outcomes'.¹ Although more research is needed to determine with any degree of certainty which specific activities are associated with improved outcomes, it is generally accepted that 'medical professionalism (defined as a set of values, behaviours, and relationships that underpin the trust the public has in doctors) lies at the heart of being a good doctor'. In addition, 'The practice of medicine is distinguished by the need for judgement in the face of uncertainty'.² The doctor's ability to make good judgements depends on his or her up-to-date scientific knowledge and experience. If SAJCH can contribute to this ability, it will have achieved its aim.

SAJCH had a successful initial run of 4 quarterly issues in 2007. This second issue for 2008 was planned not only as the launch issue but also to come out in time for the historic combined and parallel congress(es) of various local child health groups: SAPA, the South African Paediatric Association; ALLSA, the Allergy Society of South Africa; PANDA, the Paediatric Neurology and Developmental Association of Southern Africa; SAAPS, the South African Association of Paediatric Surgeons; and SACCSSG, the South African Children's Cancer Study Group. This year's meetings will also be hosting representatives from UNAPSA, the Union of National African Paediatric Societies and Associations. It has been a great pleasure, and also highly encouraging, to read many of the excellent abstracts to be presented at the congress(es) and which we have published in this issue.

As child health professionals in South Africa we now have our own platform for publishing - we no longer need to fight for space in our 'big brother' journal *SAMJ*. We have now established a peer review mechanism, on-line-manuscript submission and recognition for accredited CPD points. Journal accreditation with the South African National Department of Education is also imminent. SAJCH is a forward-looking 'open access' journal that is free to publish in (authors are not charged page fees) and free to access (readers can access complete PDFs of manuscripts free of charge). The availability of manuscripts not only on our website but also in Google Scholar is intended to increase visibility of our publications. The last hurdle is to be listed with the American National Institute of Health Library

of Science's Medline database. The latter is achievable, but achieving it depends on all of us; the most important criterion we need to fulfil is to publish high-quality content, so you are all invited to submit your best work for peer review. While it is not possible to accept all manuscripts for publication, we will endeavour to speed up the review process and give useful feedback that will increase the chances for subsequent publication.

We thank members of the editorial board and all authors and reviewers who have helped with the journal to date, and extend a special thank you to the contributors to this issue for their informative articles. SAJCH, the home for the child health practitioner (whether medical, surgical or allied specialities), invites you to make yourself at home. Please register on the website and inform us of your skills - we need more peer-reviewers. Feel free to write, comment on published manuscripts, and make suggestions to improve this service to the profession. We look forward to SAJCH claiming its rightful place as a leading journal in Africa and the world - but we need your help! Finally, welcome to Sun City to all of you, especially to our brothers and sisters from the rest of the African continent.

Journal website: www.sajch.org.za

CPD: www.cpdjournals.org.za

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1. Marinopoulos SS, Dorman T, Ratanawongsa N, et al. Effectiveness of continuing medical education. *Evid Rep Technol Assess* 2007; 149: 1-69.
2. Working Party of the Royal College of Physicians. Doctors in society. Medical professionalism in a changing world. *Clin Med* 2005; 5(6 Suppl 1): S5-40.

A warm South African congratulations on the publication of *Primary Newborn Care: A Learning Programme for Professionals*, edited by Professor David Wood (reviewed on p. 57).