

# Welcome to a new partner - the South African Paediatric Association

Since the *South African Journal of Child Health's* first issue nearly 12 years ago, the journal has envisaged its role as being a vehicle in which research relevant to South African and African child health professionals is published, after appropriate peer review. Initially published as a print journal, it became a solely online journal in 2014. It is of interest to note that online access to the journal has risen progressively over the last 5 years; in January 2014 articles were accessed 169 times, while in January 2019 the figure was nearly 15 times greater at 2 487, so it is clear that the journal's online publication is becoming more widely known and utilised. While submission numbers have increased over time, the acceptance rate remains steady at ~50%. Although not currently indexed in PubMed (which hopefully will be addressed in the near future), it is indexed in Scopus and accredited for subsidy purposes by the Department of Higher Education and Training. The *SAJCH* is recognised and indexed by The Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) SA which is considered to be the premier searchable full-text database of selected peer-reviewed SA journals. In 2016, it was accepted in the Directory of Open Access Journals, a database aimed at increasing the 'visibility, accessibility, reputation, usage and impact of quality, peer-reviewed, open access scholarly research journals'.

As part of our efforts to improve the journal's penetration among SA paediatricians and other child health professionals, and to keep the article publication fee at an acceptable rate despite the escalating costs associated with online publication, we approached the South African Paediatric Association (SAPA) for help. The *SAJCH* is pleased to welcome the SAPA, which is enthusiastic about making the *SAJCH* its official publication. Globally, many major paediatric associations support a professional journal in which the latest research and clinical information pertinent to the association's and its members' needs are published. For instance, the American Academy of Pediatrics publishes *Pediatrics*. Importantly, as SAPA's official publication, the *SAJCH* has been guaranteed its editorial independence. It is accepted that the views expressed in the journal are those of the authors/editor and may not necessarily reflect SAPA policy. Publication of material from the association (e.g. policy statements) will pass the same editorial and peer review process as material submitted by others.

SAPA hopes to enhance the scientific status of the journal by encouraging its members to contribute scientific content (e.g. research

articles, letters, commentaries) that is likely to be cited. It will assist in the dissemination of the content of each new issue of the journal through its email and social media systems. Further, it will promote engagement by its membership in journal activities, such as acting as peer reviewers and editorial board members. Although the *SAJCH* is available online at no cost to the reader, there are obviously costs involved in its administration and publication. SAPA will contribute to meeting these costs. By supporting the journal, SAPA is indirectly supporting research in the country.

National and international medical societies provide many membership benefits but common to all is the desire to enhance the exposure to educational experiences for their members. By doing this, the societies hope to influence clinical practice and patient care in a direct and positive manner. For SAPA the primary mechanism over the years has been through hosting a biennial conference. With the explosion of social media and newer technologies, SAPA has recognised the need to adapt and incorporate these, an example being the offering of monthly live online webinars. The journal offers another way to reach its membership and influence their educational exposure. SAPA also hopes to promote greater debate within the South African paediatric community through publishing opinion pieces and advocacy policy statements.

SAPA will host a one-page section in each issue of the journal where news and developments relevant to South African paediatrics and child health will be highlighted. In addition, new evidence-based practice changes, or guidelines, local continuing medical events, and activities of value to SAPA members will be showcased. A regular synopsis of ground-breaking international and local studies will be featured.

In conclusion, the editor of the *SAJCH* welcomes the partnership with SAPA, and hopes that the relationship will strengthen the journal's position among child health professionals, both nationally and internationally.

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