

New editor for *SA Journal of Child Health*



Dr John Pettifor, new editor of the *SAJCH*, was until his retirement 4 years ago head of the Department of Paediatrics at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and director of the Medical Research Council (MRC) Mineral Metabolism Research Unit and the Birth to Twenty longitudinal study. He is a National Research Foundation A-rated scientist, serves on the editorial boards of a number of international bone and nutrition journals, and has received national and international research awards.

Pettifor qualified as a doctor from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1968 and then specialised in paediatrics, which he completed in 1974. In 1978/9 he spent a year as a clinical research fellow at the Shriners Hospital in Montreal with Dr Francis Glorieux studying paediatric bone diseases, the first of many to have honed their skills in paediatric metabolic bone disease at that institution. On his return to South Africa (SA) he established the Mineral Metabolism Research Unit and was appointed its director by the SA MRC in 1985, a position he held until his retirement. In 1981 he obtained the PhD (Med) for studies into the role of low dietary calcium intake in the pathogenesis of rickets in children in rural areas of SA.

Pettifor's major research interests have focused on metabolic bone diseases in children, and in particular the roles of vitamin D and dietary calcium intake in the pathogenesis of rickets. He is currently involved in a longitudinal study of ethnic differences in bone mass in children and the factors influencing bone growth and acquisition during puberty. He has over 200 publications in accredited journals, has written 30 chapters in books, and is co-editor of the only book published internationally on paediatric bone diseases.

Pettifor is an Emeritus Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, has been appointed an Honorary Professorial Researcher in the Department of Paediatrics, and is a member of the Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit. He is also director of the Carnegie Clinician PhD Fellowship Programme in the Wits Faculty of Health Sciences.