
EDITORIAL

It was my privilege to start the *South African Orthopaedic Journal* as its first editor, in August 2002. Since then it has been published quarterly without interruption. During this period I got to know the academic prowess of many colleagues very well. This was accompanied by the additional privilege of getting to know them better as individuals. It has been an enriching experience.

Articles were contributed by the academic departments of all training institutions in our country as well as by the private sector. It was inspiring to observe the productivity of orthopaedists in both sectors in spite of their many other responsibilities and busy practices. One of the main functions of the *South African Orthopaedic Journal (SAOJ)*, as a peer-reviewed journal, is to give registrars the opportunity to publish the results of their research as part of the requirements of universities for the final MMed degree. In the near future it will also be required by the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa. No research is complete without being published.

Admittedly it is very difficult for a registrar to publish an article in international journals that already have to cope with an overabundance of articles.

The reward for having an article published in a peer-reviewed journal is priceless. It enables one to share one's knowledge and experience with colleagues both here and abroad to the benefit of many patients.

Currently our main aim is to continue our effort to obtain membership of Medline. According to the information available to us we have fulfilled the necessary requirements but the journal has not been awarded membership. Nevertheless I am confident that we will eventually succeed as the articles we publish are of a very high standard.

I am greatly indebted to many people who have helped me along the way to achieve what we have at this stage:

- The Editorial Board of the South African Orthopaedic Association (SAOA) for their input, advice and crucial role that they fulfil as representatives of the SAOA that is the parent body of the *SAOJ*.
- All colleagues who have worked very hard to produce quality articles.
- All colleagues responsible for peer-reviewing. This can be very time-consuming and hard work.
- Orthopaedists who have supplied me with expert opinions on published articles.
- My right hand, Henriette Strydom, without whose very conscientious, meticulous and outstanding ability in taking care of all incoming and outgoing articles at different stages of preparation, successful publication of the journal would not have been possible.
- The publisher who did her work in an excellent way together with her staff.

The editor of a journal is seldom in a position of authority; he can never crack the whip. However, he must act firmly but bear in mind that he is dependent on many other people. In addition, for myself as Editor, prayer was indispensable.

The quality of articles in a journal represents the standard of orthopaedic surgery in the country of publication. It has to be as good as or better than the quality of such articles in other countries that have a much larger academic pool to draw from. Despite the shortage of orthopaedic surgeons in the private and the academic sector, we have our own journal with peer-reviewed articles at hand!

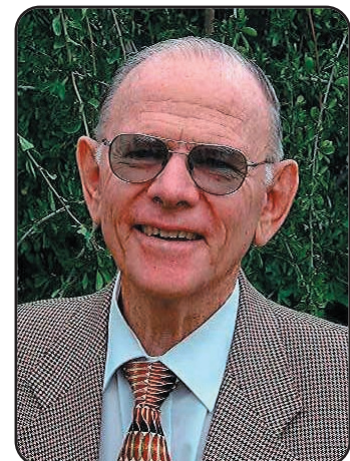
Our journal conveys knowledge to isolated colleagues for the benefit of their patients in other countries of this great African continent, free of charge. There is even room to expand this service.

Finally, let us all be aware of the fact that universities put more and more emphasis on research. The only way to measure the productivity of researchers is by the number and quality of articles that they have published. Our journal contributes to this need.

Prof Gert Vlok, at the request of the South African Orthopaedic Association, initiated the process of getting an authorised orthopaedic journal registered with the Department of Education as an accredited peer-reviewed journal with its own ISSN 1681-150X number.

It is also interesting to note that the first 'Message from the President' of the *South African Orthopaedic Journal* published in August 2002 was by Prof Anton Schepers, the then President of the South African Orthopaedic Association.

I am very glad and proud to inform you that Prof Schepers will henceforth take over the reins of our journal.



*Prof RP Gräbe
Outgoing
Editor-in-Chief*