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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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## Spread the load

Orthopaedics has become an exacting and demanding science. The body of knowledge has expanded exponentially. Techniques have become more complex and critical. Patients have become more and more demanding, with often unrealistic expectations. Because we are continuously exposed to these demands on our time and expertise, we start accepting this as the norm. It is important to keep these demands on us within acceptable limits, and to this end we can use several mechanisms to good effect.

Second opinions are extremely helpful in confirming diagnoses and deciding on treatment regimens. Patients appreciate your putting them first, and before your own ego, by asking colleagues to see them as well. Discussions with these colleagues normally clarify a problem, and often make the treatment obvious.

Assisting colleagues in theatre is a privilege and takes a difficult case and makes it manageable, and fun. Two minds applied to a problem make that problem a quarter, rather than half as big. We also so often work in isolation, and see so little of our colleagues and friends, that this often presents a good opportunity to interact with them.

Journal clubs and clinical meetings are an easy way to keep up to date, with the symbiotic atmosphere conducive to the easy dissemination of knowledge and information. Your input and interaction at such meetings is effectively multiplied by the number of people present.

Journals are important in our knowledge of orthopaedics. Writing an article focuses one's thoughts on a topic like nothing else. A well-structured article with definite take-home messages makes the assimilation of knowledge easy. Discussion of problems in correspondence columns helps crystallise issues and resolve controversies. Not only are the recognised international journals important, but we are indeed fortunate to have our own *SA Orthopaedic Journal* at our disposal.

It is extremely important that one uses all the possible means at one's disposal to decrease the demands on us professionally. Medicine and especially Orthopaedics is tough enough. Spread the load!



**Dick van der Jagt**  
**President: South African Orthopaedic Association**

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