

---

# EDITORIAL

---

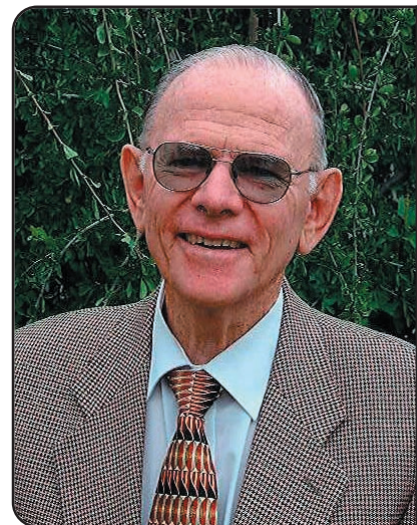
It is a basic principle in medicine that a thorough knowledge of the normal progress of a disease is important before a physician can embark on a specific mode of treatment. If this approach is ignored it can result in unwanted complications resulting from incorrect treatment, be it conservative or surgical. We all know that the common cold will improve after a week or so and that antibiotics are not indicated. The incorrect administration of antibiotics results in resistant strains, much to the disadvantage of the patient.

The all-too-common low backache tends to heal without any treatment in a large percentage of patients and in about 90 per cent of cases with only conservative treatment.

According to recognised articles written by reputable orthopaedic surgeons, not more than 5 per cent of all patients suffering from low backache with or without leg symptoms should come to surgery.

If this fact is kept in mind, very good results can be expected from surgery to the few who need it. If not, the incidence of repeated lower back surgery for a second, third or fourth procedure becomes high with a smaller chance of recovery with every attempt.

This edition of the *South African Orthopaedic Journal* is devoted mainly to low backache with or without leg symptoms. Since some very prominent and knowledgeable spinal surgeons contributed to this edition I take the liberty of encouraging all our readers to read each article with great attention.



Prof RP Gräbe  
Editor-in-Chief

---

## Plagiarism

The plagiarised article mentioned in a previous issue was discussed at the meeting of the Editorial Board of the *South African Orthopaedic Journal* on 14 March 2008. The article, Fracture remodelling in children, was published in Vol 6 No 2 of the *SAOJ*.

The departmental head concerned had a detailed interview with the author of the article published in the *South African Orthopaedic Journal*. He also addressed all registrars as well as his whole department on the seriousness of such a transgression.

We are most grateful to the author of the original article, Prof Kaye Wilkins, Prof of Orthopaedics and Pediatrics, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio that she decided not to take legal action. This article was published in Volume 36 of the *Journal of Injury*. I have sent a formal apology to all those involved including Prof Kaye Wilkins, Dr Charles Rockwood and Dr Steve Krikler, editor of the *Journal of Injury*.

I urge all who publish in our own journal to make absolutely sure that nothing is copied without the permission of the original author, publisher of the journal concerned and its editor.

In all future articles, please make sure that you add the following comment:

**The content of this article is the sole work of the authors.**

RP Gräbe  
Editor-in-Chief

---