
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The contents of this issue of the *South African Orthopaedic Journal* are timeless and topical. Both our profession and industry have come under intense scrutiny. The actions of the Department of Justice in America have reverberated around the world. The world has become a global village, and laws and regulations in one part will eventually percolate down to the furthest corners of our community and influence our practice of orthopaedics.

Kickbacks in whatever form or guise are wrong, and those involved should be ostracised. Because we are involved in the medical world, dealing with patients' lives and well-being, we will be scrutinised more closely than in any other industry. Our actions and morals should therefore be beyond reproach. Judging whether your actions are ethical depends on only two issues: perception and intent. How does the community at large perceive your actions, and what was the intent of those actions. This determines whether they can be regarded as ethical.

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between ethical and legal. I believe that ethics dictates how you sleep, whereas the law decides where you sleep. To be able to work at our chosen profession with the dedication it needs, we all need to sleep well.

Times have changed. We will be judged by standards that are more stringent than those applied to normal industry. This scrutiny is justified because of past excesses. We are dealing with patients and not routine consumables. Our behaviour has to comply with new standards, and this includes academic contributions to this journal. It will be difficult to balance openness and honesty in our professional lives, and the need to innovate and co-operate with industry to advance the art and science of orthopaedics, but with perseverance "Yes we can!"

I am delighted to introduce the new look of the *South African Orthopaedic Journal*. The new cover and binding are appropriate for a journal of our quality. It is also correct that nothing detracts from the content and the status of the academic contributions. That after all is the reason for the journal! Placing advertisements only at the beginning and end of the journal highlights the importance of the articles. I believe that this cosmetic but fundamental change augers well for the future of the journal. I would like to thank the publishers, my colleagues on the editorial board, and in particular Prof Gräbe, for their continued dedication and hard work, ensuring the on-going success of our journal.

Dick van der Jagt
President: South African Orthopaedic Association

