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# EDITORIAL

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With the ongoing support of orthopaedic surgeons in the Republic of South Africa who continue to do research and increase their knowledge of a variety of orthopaedic conditions, the *South African Orthopaedic Journal* is now in its ninth year of existence.

It may be valid to ask whether so much effort and hard work is justified. Or it may also be argued that registrars receive solid training at the different universities in our country and are capable, at the end of a five-year programme, to practise as orthopaedic surgeons.

This cannot be disputed, but knowledge has to keep track of new developments. In addition to the body of basic knowledge that is unique to every discipline and remains valid indefinitely, new information is developed every day. Surgeons who neglect reading their medical journals, either in print or on-line for a two-year period, will have missed very important scientific facts that could have enhanced their clinical practice.

Whether orthopaedic surgeons treat their patients in the operating room or according to more conservative methods, their practice must be based on thorough theoretical knowledge or it will not stand the test of time.

Doctors who received their training some years ago may lag behind their younger colleagues because of the demands of recent developments. In clinical practice, it is imperative to have the foundation of recent knowledge in order to offer patients the best available treatment.

Orthopaedic surgery constantly faces new developments in each of its many subdivisions. This discipline has such a vast field of study that more and more surgeons confine themselves to specialising in only one specific subdivision.

The *South African Orthopaedic Journal* plays a very important role in helping orthopaedic surgeons maintain high standards of practice. The journal publishes articles of a high standard by having contributions peer-reviewed by two experts in the relevant field.

This journal is distributed to all orthopaedic surgeons in full-time academic posts, as well as to all in private practice. It is available to all registrars in training. It plays a very important role in South Africa by informing all our members of new developments in their field. It is also distributed to 150 orthopaedic surgeons in 15 African states north of our borders.

May these few thoughts stimulate you to put your experience into writing for the benefit of surgeons in South Africa as well as those working under difficult circumstances in other countries in Africa.

**Prof RP Gräbe**  
Editor-in-Chief, *SA Orthopaedic Journal*

