

A New Chapter for SAJCH

The South African Journal of Child Health is entering a new phase in 2026. We welcome a new editorial team who, in collaboration with the South African Medical Association (SAMA) and the South African Paediatric Association (SAPA), aim to produce a journal with clinically relevant content that meaningfully informs practice and policy in the South African context.

Professor John Pettifor has been an exemplary leader for SAJCH for over 10 years. As he steps down as Editor-in-Chief, we applaud his exceptional work ethic and dedication to producing a high-quality publication in service of the child health community. We thank him for his longstanding contribution and wish him a well as he enjoys a very well-earned retirement.

Strengthening Governance and Editorial Leadership

We extend a warm welcome to Professor Rajendra Bhimma, the incoming Editor-in-Chief. Prof. Bhimma is the Head of Paediatric Nephrology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He will lead a team of associate editors, including:

Dr Tinsae Alemayehu, University of Botswana

A paediatric infectious disease specialist with specific interest in antimicrobial stewardship and its impact on management of childhood infections.

Professor Daynia Ballot, University of the Witwatersrand.

A neonatologist with extensive experience in medical education.

Professor Mariana Kruger, Stellenbosch University.

Her broad areas of expertise includes nutrition, oncology and haematology and medical ethics.

Professor Siyazi Mda, Nelson Mandela University

His experience spans the breadth of general paediatrics, with special interest in nutrition and growth, diabetes and health systems.

Associate Professor Lizelle van Wyk, Stellenbosch University.

Experienced in research methodology and systematic reviews, as well as neonatology, cardiology and nutrition.

Professor Sithembiso Velaphi, University of the Witwatersrand.

A neonatologist and is keenly involved in health systems strengthening.

The editorial workload will be distributed amongst this leadership team, who will provide oversight and governance to the editorial processes and engage with the paediatric and child health community to build a strong research culture.

Why SAJCH Matters: Relevance for the Paediatric Community

SAJCH has a long history of supporting the work of early-career researchers by publishing their research outputs. We remain committed to capacitating emerging researchers. In addition to publishing manuscripts, the journal endeavours to offer clear and constructive reviewer feedback, as well as capacity-strengthening initiatives in collaboration with SAMA and SAPA.

As we move forward, we aim to position SAJCH as a platform for research that informs local clinical practice, policy, and programme implementation. We recognise the need for African-led evidence in paediatrics and child health and intend to engage actively with local researchers to showcase the excellent work being done.

What's New: Revised Journal Structure

Future editions of SAJCH we intend to include:

- Eight original articles per issue
- A regular editorial or commentary
- Review articles of paediatric diseases

We invite creative and engaging submissions that spark dialogue and reflection within the paediatric community.

Faster, More Visible: Early Online Publication

All articles that have cleared the editorial processes are published early online to shorten the time between acceptance and visibility. Articles will continue to be published in the quarterly online edition, but citation lead time is reduced through this functionality of the publishing platform.

Increasing Visibility and Indexing

SAJCH is accredited with the Department of Higher Education and Training. The vision is for SAJCH to be listed in major indexing services (e.g. PubMed). To achieve this, the editorial team will maintain a consistent publication schedule, have transparent editorial policies, ensure robust peer-review processes with due consideration of ethical compliance, and include international colleagues in the editorial process (e.g. peer review).

Call to Action

As we step into this new chapter, we reaffirm our commitment to making the South African Journal of Child Health a relevant, credible, and sustainable platform—one that champions African scholarship, informs clinical and policy practice, and nurtures emerging researchers. We thank the paediatric and child health community for their continued engagement and support in realising this vision.