

# Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa

## Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in the Health Sciences and Related Medical Fields



science  
& technology

Department:  
Science and Technology  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



higher education  
& training

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The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) was inaugurated in May 1996. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all fields of scientific enquiry in a seamless way, and including in its ranks the full diversity of South Africa's distinguished scientists.

The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (*Act 67 of 2001*), as amended, which came into operation on 15 May 2002.

This has made ASSAf the official Academy of Science of South Africa, recognised by government and representing South Africa in the international community of science academies.

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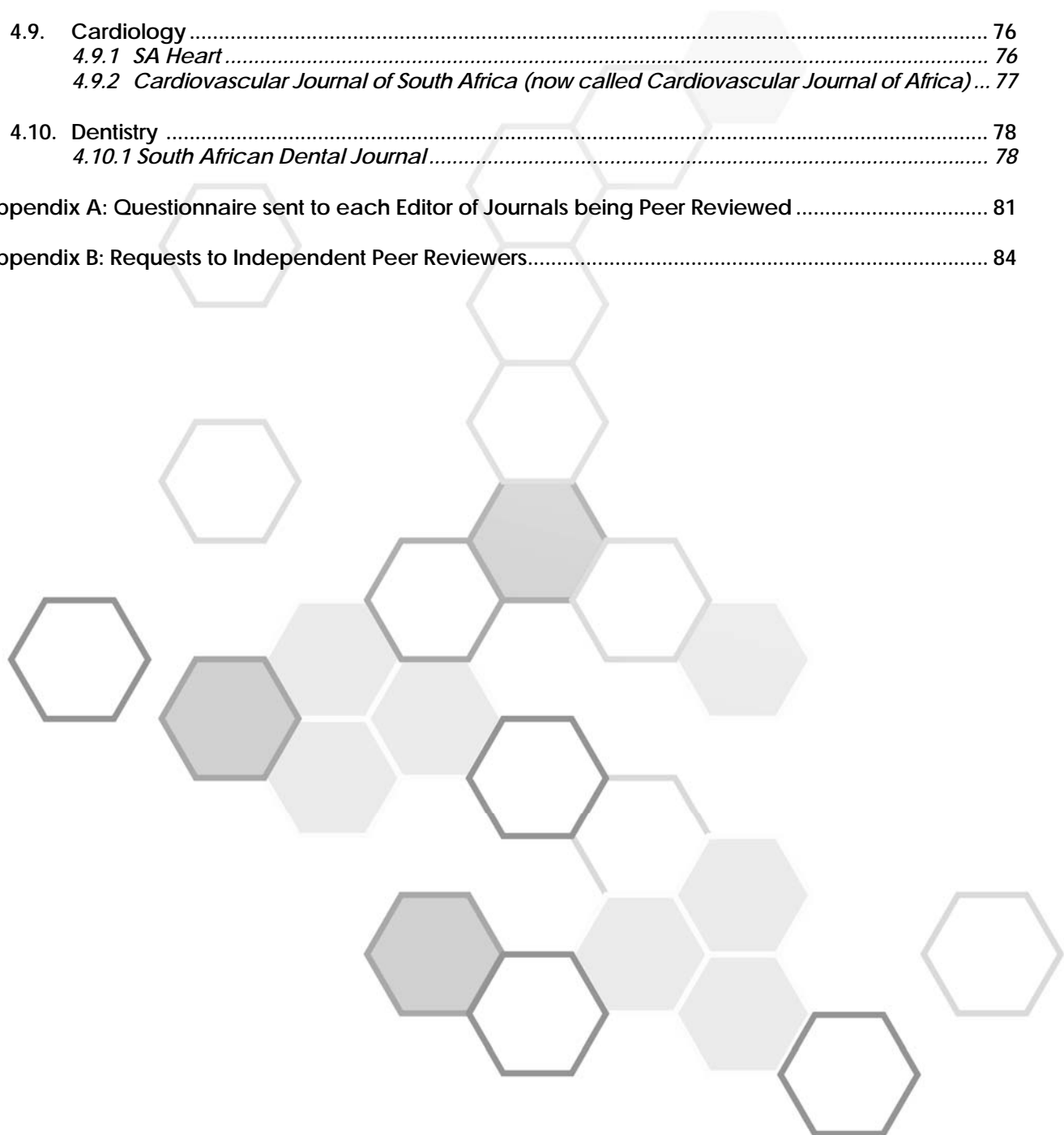
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## Acronyms/Abbreviations

AFAPHERD-SD	Africa Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance
AB	Advisory board
ADSA	Association for Dietetics in South Africa
AGM	Annual general meeting
AJOL	African Journals Online
ALLSA	Allergy Society of South Africa
ASSAf	Academy of Science of South Africa
CCS	Critical Care Society
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CPD	Continuous professional development
CSPISA	Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa
DENOSA	Nursing Organisation of SA
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
ECG	Electrocardiography
FHU	Fort Hare University
FUNDISA	Forum of University Nursing Deans of South Africa
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HMPG	Health and Medical Publishing Group
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IAB	International advisory board
IACAPAP	International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions
ICASA	Infection Control Society of South Africa
IP	Intellectual property
FIMS	<i>Fédération Internationale de Médecine duSport</i>
IDSSA	Diseases Society of Southern Africa
NHI	National Health Insurance
PHASA	Public Health Association of South Africa
OMT	Orthopaedic manipulation therapy
OT	Occupational therapy
SASPID	South African Society of Paediatric Infectious Diseases
SAACAPAP	South African Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions
SAMA	South African Medical Association
SASCM	South African Society for Clinical Microbiology
SASLHA	South African Speech Language and Hearing Association
SASP	South African Society of Physiotherapy
SASPEN	South African Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition
SASTM	South African Society of Travel Medicine
SEM	Sports and exercise medicine
SEMDSA	Society for Endocrinology, Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa
SIDA	Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency
SMLTSA	Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists of South Africa
STDSSA	Sexually Transmitted Diseases Society of Southern Africa
WCPT	World Confederation for Physical Therapy





## Preface

### Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPISA)

#### *Discipline-grouped Peer-review Reports on South African Scholarly Journals*

This report marks the fourth in the series of discipline-grouped evaluations of South African scholarly journals. Ultimately, it is intended that all scholarly journals in the country will have been subjected to independent, multiple peer review as part of a quality assurance process initiated by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). The quality assurance process is a precursor to the identification of journal titles to be loaded on to the open access platform, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) South Africa. Only journals of a sufficiently high quality will be included in this fully indexed, free online, multinational platform, now also to be directly featured on the Thomson-Reuters Web of Knowledge portal.

The traditional focus of peer review is on a single journal article, book chapter or book. It is less common to subject journals to independent, multiple peer review, as these are usually evaluated in qualitative, reputational terms, or, bibliometrically, by means of impact factors.

Peer review of South African scholarly journal titles thus required the development of a new methodology that was piloted successfully with the first two discipline-grouped peer-review reports, published in 2010 on the Social Sciences and Related Fields, and the Agricultural and Related Basic Life Sciences. This has not been achieved without difficulty, as the process is unfamiliar to reviewers accustomed to reviewing single articles. In 2013, the *Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in Religion, Theology and Related Fields* was published.

ASSAf has confidence in this ambitious programme aimed at assuring that the bulk of South African scholarly journals is of a high quality. The process goes beyond the above-mentioned familiar journal assessment approaches by providing concrete recommendations to enable the editor(s) of journals not deemed to be of a sufficient standard to take corrective action and to reapply for evaluation.

In summary, the process was centred on multi-perspective, discipline-based evaluation panels appointed by the Academy Council on the recommendation of the Academy's Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPISA); journal editors were requested to complete specially designed questionnaires, and peer reviewers were selected from a spectrum of scholars in the fields concerned. Each was asked to provide answers to a set of questions, which addressed the quality, scope and focus of the peer-reviewed articles in the journals under review, the authorship generally, and the presence or absence of enrichment features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and 'news and views' articles. [The editors' questionnaire and peer reviewers' set of questions are provided as appendices to this report.]

Each discipline-based evaluation panel met to discuss the individual peer reviews and questionnaires and consolidated them into a consensus review for each journal. Final formulations and recommendations were prepared, including suggestions for improvement from both the peer reviewers and the panel. The responsible editors were given an opportunity to check the accuracy of the information in each individual journal report, and the final version of the report was submitted for approval to the ASSAf Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa and the Council of the Academy of Science of South Africa.

As the fourth in the series of reports, it is evident that much has been learned from the two pilot discipline groups and that going forward; the process will become more streamlined such that subsequent reports will follow in rapid succession.

I would like to thank the members of the evaluation panel, particularly Prof Wieland Gevers, Chair of the Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa, for his leadership in this quality-assurance process. I acknowledge the important role played by the staff of the Academy in supporting the process; Ms Susan Veldsman, Director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit, and the many Project Officers who worked under her direction over the years, namely, Thabo Radebe, Zwelibanzi Ndayi and Ms Gugulethu Mtsweni. Ms Patricia Scholtz is thanked for copy editing. Finally, I acknowledge the contribution of the many individual peer reviewers who have each contributed towards strengthening the quality of South African scholarly journals.

**Prof Roseanne Diab**  
Executive Officer, ASSAf



## Foreword

### Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

#### University Policy and Development Support

On 1 February 2013, the Department of Higher Education and Training published a call for public comments on the proposed improvements to the Policy and Procedures for Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions, 2003 in the *Government Gazette*. Publication was part of a consultative process with the higher education sector. The Department welcomes inputs and comments made on the proposed improvements to the policy which aim to increase research productivity and reward high-quality research published in accredited journals, books and published conference proceedings. There can be no doubt that the policy has propelled the performance of the sector on research outputs and that momentum has to be sustained and improved further. Thus, the proposed improvements are meant to propel the sector further in this regard.

In terms of the proposed improvements, the policy seeks to include additional journal lists and/or indices for purposes of subsidy allocations. Moreover, all indices or lists will be communicated separately and well in advance, rather than included in the actual policy. The Department will determine, in consultation with the sector, which journal lists and indices will be approved each year. As it is the current practice, the Department will issue the indices and the approved List of South African Journals on or before 31 January of every year. In an attempt to improve quality of local journals, the policy seeks to encourage all journals in the Approved List of South African Journals to develop to international standards, in order to apply for listing on accredited international lists or indices.

A decline in scholarly book publications and a report on *Scholarly Books: Their Production, Use and Evaluation in South Africa Today* in 2009 by the Academy of Science of South Africa, resulted in the policy proposing that a book be subsidised to a maximum of ten units or a portion thereof, based on the number of pages being claimed relative to the total number of pages of the book. The policy further suggests the improvement in the number of units for book publications in order to encourage production of, and publications, in books. The assumption is that academic books are important.

The Department seeks to develop a list of reputable publishers as it is difficult for academics or researchers to obtain evidence of peer review from the publishers, both locally and internationally.

The Department has improved the processes and procedure by which published conference proceedings are subsidised. More improvements in this regard are addressed in the policy. All the approved indices carry a large number of published conference proceedings which undergo quality scrutiny.

The Department welcomes suggestions on the improvement of its work and that of this policy, in particular.

The overall objective has to be that of constantly improving the performance and measurement of the sector. Most importantly, the quality of research outputs needs to be improved.

It is anticipated that the quality of research outputs, in order to enhance and reward where measurable, will be emphasised over the next few years.

The policy will be focused on quality research output measurements and reward to the institutions. It is important that universities recognise all outputs, including those not addressed by this policy.

Additions to the policy regarding the recognition of creative outputs are currently undertaken. While textbooks and other outputs are important, universities are urged to put systems in place in order to include these.

#### Mr Mahlubi Mabizela

Chief Director: University Education Policy and Development

#### Mr Walter Ntuli

Senior Administrative Clerk: University Education Policy and Development



# 1

## Periodic Peer Review of South African Scholarly Journals: Approved Process Guidelines and Criteria

### 1.1 Background

At the launch of the ASSAf-led National Scholarly Editors' Forum (NSEF) held on 25 July 2007, 112 participants supported ASSAf and its Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPISA) took the lead in the implementation of Recommendation 5 of the 2006 ASSAf *Report on A Strategic Approach to Research Publishing in South Africa*. This recommendation dealt specifically with the need for a system of quality assurance for the more than 260 scholarly journals that are accredited by the Department of Education:

**Recommendation 5: that ASSAf be mandated jointly by the Departments of Education and Science and Technology to carry out external peer review and associated quality audit of all South African research journals in 5-year cycles, probably best done in relation to groups of titles sharing a particular broad disciplinary focus, in order to make recommendations for improved functioning of each journal in the national and international system.**

### 1.2 ASSAf Peer Review Panels (PRPs)

The quality-assurance system for journals is conducted primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed peer-review panels (PRPs) drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, as well as persons with practical (technical) publishing experience. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPISA, but appointed by the Academy Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and relevant inputs, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and final consideration sequentially by the CSPISA and the ASSAf Council.

The following quote from the ASSAf Report clarifies the approach to be followed in the review of the journals and some aspects of the approach proposed:

*"The periodic, grouped quality assurance-directed peer review of South African research periodicals would function analogously to the quality audits of the Council on Higher Education/ Higher Education Quality Committee (CHE/ HEQC), would be developed as an outcome of the Editors' Forum, and would focus on: the quality of editorial and review process; fitness of, and for purpose; positioning in the global cycle of new and old journals listed and indexed in databases; financial sustainability; and scope and size issues. The ASSAf panels carrying out the reviews would each comprise six to eight experts, some of whom would not be directly drawn from the areas concerned, and would require data-gathering, interviews, and international comparisons, before reports with recommendations are prepared, approved, and released to stakeholders such as national associations, the Departments of Science and Technology and of Higher Education, the CHE/HEQC, the NRF and HESA."*

It must be emphasised that the main purpose of the ASSAf review process of journals is to improve the quality of scholarly publication in the country in a manner that is consonant with traditional scholarly practices, primarily voluntary peer review; it is not an attempt to control these publications in any way. ASSAf respects the independence and freedom of researchers and of the research process itself as important preconditions for the critical and innovative production of new knowledge. At the same time, the work of South African researchers has to be assessed, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as part of the global community of scholars and scientists, and in this respect ASSAf has an obligation to contribute to the improvement of quality of such work where possible.

### 1.3 Initial Criteria

A number of criteria were explored in the section (Chapter 4) of the ASSAf Report that dealt with the survey of over 200 then-current editors of accredited South African scholarly journals. Other possible

criteria were proposed in other sections of the Report, or have since been suggested by members of the CSPiSA or the National Scholarly Editors' Forum. These are grouped and listed below (they have been consolidated in the Questionnaire presented in Appendix A):

### 1.3.1 **Editorial Process-related Criteria: Generally Based on the Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review developed by ASSAf**

- Longevity of the journal (continuous or discontinuous), in years?
- Number of original peer-reviewed papers published per year during the last five years, plus number of manuscripts submitted, plus number rejected out-of-hand or after peer review? Average length of published papers? 'Author demography' of papers submitted and published?
- Number and nature of peer reviewers used per manuscript and the overall number per year, including institutional and national/international spread, plus quality (as per code of best practice) and average length of peer-review reports?
- Average delay before publication of submitted manuscripts? Frequency of publication?
- Professional stature and experience of the editor? How selected? How long in service? Success or otherwise in addressing the major issues in the field, through commissioning of reviews/articles, editorial comment, etc?
- Number and professional stature/experience of editorial board members, plus selection processes, turnover, and nature of involvement in handling of manuscripts or in other functions? If international members serve on the board (desirable), are they a mix from developed or developing countries?
- Existence and nature of editorial policy/guidelines, plus how often revised/updated? Conflict-of-interest policy (e.g. how manuscripts are assessed when submitted by an editor or board member as author/co-author?)
- *Errata* published - how many per year?
- Value-adding features, such as editorials, new and views, correspondence on papers, reviews, policy/topical fora, etc. - how many, and how generated? What proportion of total pages in journal issues?
- Any peer-review process of journal already in place (e.g. by professional association)?

### 1.3.2 **Business-related Criteria**

- Frequency and regularity ('on time') of publication?
- Print runs? (Redundant stock? Direct *versus* indirect distribution to readers?)
- Production model and service provider(s)?
- Paid and unpaid advertising?
- Sponsorship? What *quid pro quos*?
- Paid and unpaid subscription base? How marketed? Cost level of print and (if applicable) e-subscriptions?
- E-publication? If so, what website/portal, and access possibilities for users? What evaluation is done, especially in respect of tagging and searchability?
- Are there html/xml and pdf versions, or only pdf? Are multimedia used?
- What portals for open access, if provided? If not e-published, is this being considered, and how?
- Total income and expenditure per annum?
- Distribution to international destinations?
- Indexed in Thomson ISI and/or IBSS, or any other international database? If so, for how long and how continuous?
- Offers to purchase from multinational publishers?
- Copyright arrangements?

### 1.3.3 **Bibliometric Assessments**

- Citation practice – how many authors listed?
- If applicable, ISI-type impact factors (and various derivatives) over last five years?
- Are reviews a regular/increasing feature?
- If articles are not in English, are English abstracts mandatory?

## 1.4 Process Guidelines for Setting up the Panels, Peer Reviewers, Panel Meetings and Reports for the Subject Peer Review of Journals

### Background to ASSAf Peer-review Panels (PRPs)

The quality assurance system for journals is conducted primarily through discipline-grouped peer reviews carried out by a series of purpose-appointed peer-review panels (PRPs) drawn from the ranks of researchers and other experienced scholars in and around the fields concerned in each case, as well as persons with practical (technical) publishing experience. The proposed ASSAf PRPs are overseen by the CSPISA, but appointed by the Academy Council. Their draft reports are sent to relevant stakeholders for comment and relevant inputs, before finalisation by the PRP concerned, and final consideration sequentially by the CSPISA and the ASSAf Council.

### Role of the Scholarly Publishing Unit

An ASSAf projects officer of the Scholarly Publications Unit is assigned to support each panel chair, but reports to the Director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit in terms of review logistics and the production of draft and final review reports. The project officer is responsible for the following issues and activities:

- selection and appointment of the panel members;
- obtaining completed questionnaires from editors;
- organising panel activities, including meetings; selecting independent peer reviewers for each journal or groups of titles;
- drafting consolidated Version 1 reports;
- obtaining CSPISA and ASSAf Council approval for final, publishable panel reports.

#### 1.4.1 Setting up Panels

The proposed PRPs is chaired by an ASSAf Member, appointed by the Council, who assumes accountability for the panel's work in helping to developing a credible quality-assurance mechanism for South African scholarly journals.

#### Selecting Panel Members

- The appointment process of PRPs members is managed by the Chair of the Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPISA) until the panel and its chair have been appointed.
- CSPISA members are asked to assist in preparing a list of at least 12-13 names, of whom the last four to five shall be considered to be potential alternates to the first seven to eight.
- A typical PRP consists of six to eight members.
- Each name must be accompanied by critical personal and career detail, as well as a brief motivation, to enable the CSPISA, and later the ASSAf Council, to apply its mind to the question of constituting a best-possible, most-competent PRP.
- The draft list of potential members is published on the ASSAf website, and also circulated for comment to members of the National Scholarly Editors Forum, at least two weeks before the Council meeting where the appointments are to be made.
- All comments received will be noted in making the final decision.
- All provisionally listed persons are required to complete and submit conflict-of-interest forms prior to the Council's consideration of the list in question.

#### Criteria for Panel Membership

- The individuals selected to serve on a panel should have experience and credibility in the disciplines under review, or in related disciplines, or must be senior scholars who may be from a completely different discipline. Generally, the composition should be a mix of disciplinary specialists, specialists in areas cognate to the broad disciplinary area concerned, and 'wise people' who are steeped in scholarly practices and are drawn from any broad disciplinary area (respectively in an approximate ratio of 3:3:2).
- The panel members should have demonstrable expertise and experience in both the editing and peer-review aspects of research journals.

- It is not necessary that all panel members be experts in both editing and peer-review aspects – a mix of senior academics and a few active editors (of journals not under review) is appropriate – but all should have some appreciation of both editing and peer review.
- At least one member should have direct practical (technical) experience of publishing.

Persons selected as panel participants will typically be drawn from ASSAf Members, academic institutions, science councils and consultants.

### **Conflict of Interest**

- It will be necessary to take care to avoid real or perceived conflicts.
- Committee expertise, balance and conflict of interest are discussed at the first meeting (and may again be discussed at any later meeting) of PRPs, and recommendations to resolve problematic issues brought through the SPU (Secretariat) to the ASSAf Council for possible amendment of the composition of PRPs.
- Panel members are requested to submit written conflict-of-interest statements, and are bound to report any new potential sources of conflict of interest during the quality review process.

### **1.4.2 Setting up and Organising the Panels**

Organisation of the panel is conducted by its chair, supported by the assigned project officer. The activities related to organisation typically include:

- Planning and costing the review and panel activities.
- Obtaining completed questionnaires from each editor/equivalent (publishing logistics focus).
- Identifying suitable peer reviewers for each journal or group of titles (content quality focus).
- Assembling hard copies of journals for use by the panel.
- Establishing panel meeting dates, assigning tasks, and collating materials.
- Preparing and distributing pre and post-meeting materials (draft Version 1 Reports, i.e. assembled peer reviews and editor's questionnaires, in template form).
- Taking responsibility for post-meeting activities, including draft Version 2 report preparation, circulation for comment to panelists and editors, and preparation and processing of final reports.
- Evaluation of panel processes.

### **Selection of Peer Reviewers (See above)**

- At least two, but preferably three, independent peer reviewers, as well as alternative reviewers must be agreed upon by the panel for each title or group of similar titles.
- Members of the CSPISA and the ASSAf Membership in general will be given an opportunity to volunteer through a specific written call.
- Other candidates will be sought from lists of NRF and MRC grant-holders and/or science council research-active staff.
- The process of selection is overseen by the panel chair. The final agreed appointments of willing volunteer reviewers are made by the panel itself.
- Conflicts of interest must be avoided – thus current or former editors cannot become peer reviewers of the journals concerned; this also applies to current members of editorial boards.
- The projects officer must arrange access to hard or e-copies of the journals under review by independent experts.
- The core questions to be answered in each case must be provided to peer reviewers, who should be asked to ensure that these questions are all addressed in their reviews.

### **1.4.3 Panel Meetings and Procedures**

#### **Preparations**

- The ASSAf project officer is responsible to draw up the Version 1 (V1) report of each journal. Each reviewer's answers should be consolidated under the standard headings of the draft; each input



as a separate paragraph. The editor's questionnaire should also be inserted as a single item under 'business aspects'.

- The documentation (editors' questionnaires, peer-review reports) should be sent out by e-mail to all panelists at least two weeks prior to the panel meeting.
- Conveners of sub-sets of journals should be alerted at this time to their role at the forthcoming panel meeting - to present the journals in the set, and to make recommendations for discussion and elaboration. If unable to attend, they should be asked to submit written notes for presentation to the panel by the convener.
- Ideally, hard copies of issues of journals to be considered should be available at the meeting, but if logistically impossible, this can be dispensed with.
- A quorum of at least two-thirds of the members of PRPs must be guaranteed at any meeting, otherwise a new date must be sought.
- Panelists should be informed at the same time that hard copies of all documentation will be available at the meeting, in bundles containing the completed editor's questionnaire and reviewers' reports for each journal title, for collection at the start of the meeting.
- The responsible project officer should ensure that at least two peer reviews, and preferably three, are in hand for each title by the time of the initial dissemination of materials, or, by default, by the date of the meeting, for tabling on the day.

## Meeting

- Journal titles should be considered in sub-sets, as per the above.
- Consensus answers to each of the criteria should be agreed *seriatim* as per a convener's spoken summary, and noted by the project officer in attendance.
- Particular attention should be paid to reaching agreement on recommendations in respect of:
  - (a) an invitation to the publisher/editor to join the SciELO platform (note the special criteria on frequency of publication and annual number of original peer-reviewed articles);
  - (b) a recommendation to the DHET on accreditation in its list of South African journals in which any article is considered as a valid research output;
  - (c) if not recommended, suggestions for improvement that would make it possible to make an invitation and/or recommendation under 2 (iii) (a) or (b);
  - (d) suggestions for improvement or enhanced function, generally.

### 1.4.4 Post-meeting Procedures and Panel Reports

- When producing a Version 2 (V2) report the three paragraphs in each item have to be consolidated to produce a consensus version.
- A detailed and motivated draft Version 2 report of each peer-review panel's findings and recommendations is prepared by the assigned projects officer, working closely with the panel chair.
- The project officer and convener should reach agreement on the record of the meeting in respect of all outcomes, within no more than two weeks.
- The meeting record should be sent for comment and ratification to all panelists (including those who were not able to attend the meeting) and ask for replies within one week.
- The convener should prepare a final version of the meeting record, and submit a copy of each journal-specific item as a privileged communication to the editor concerned, for written comment within no more than two weeks in which to respond.
- The convener should identify any editor's comment that might materially change the recommendations in the record, and submit these to the panel for consideration and decision.
- The finally agreed-upon record should be submitted to the CSPISA for approval, before submission in turn to the ASSAf Council, and public release.



# 2

## Special Consideration Concerning South African Health Sciences and Related Medical Journals

The Panel dealt with a total of 35 journals of which 22 call themselves 'South African', six 'Southern African' and five 'African'. Only one (the *International Sport Med Journal*) is an international journal in the sense that it is the official journal of an international organisation, but is published in South Africa. The remaining journals do not refer to their 'intended readership' in the title. Accordingly, most of the journals publish mainly local authors, and the content is focused largely on local issues and topics. However, some titles have definitely become important continentally, with authors drawn from many African countries and the quality and breadth of their articles reflecting such a focus, e.g. *African Journal of AIDS Research*.

The majority of these journals (33) are published online; only two (*African Journal of Nursing and Midwifery* and *South African Orthopaedic Journal*) are produced solely in print. Most of the online journals are also available in print, but one (*The South African Optometrist*) is published solely online. Most of the online journals can be freely accessed (open access), but one restricts access to members of a national professional association (*South African Journal of Physiotherapy*) while another is open access for a limited period only (*African Journal of AIDS Research*). Pay-to-view is the only way to access the online articles in the case of three journals (*Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*; *Occupational Health Southern Africa*; *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*) while in the case of eight journals, pay-to-view is combined with free trial access.

The journals are funded through a combination of funding streams – professional organisations (which include the cost of the journal in their membership fees), advertising, subscriptions from groups and individuals, page fees and online pay-as-you-view systems are the foremost sources. Many of the journals provide printed copies to subscribers or members of the professional organisations concerned, even when the journal is available online, e.g. *Southern African Journal of Epidemiology and Infection*.

The Panel generally felt that the quality of the research articles published in this group of South African journals is 'good-to-very-good' overall, and that the processes and policies of the journals are generally sound. These journals are usually not the journal of choice for senior researchers, who prefer international journals. This preference is also promoted by the policies of some South African universities not to recognise publication in 'local' journals, and by the absence of listing some of these journals in recognised databases. However, the journals as reviewed no doubt play an important role in providing an evidence base for South African health practitioners, as well as an accessible publication opportunity for postgraduates and junior academics. This publishing opportunity will become increasingly important in the medical field as a research component is becoming a compulsory part of the MMed qualification.

Reviewers have a tendency to link the quality of a journal with whether it attracts national, regional (African) and international authors. The same can also be said about the scope of the journal. Quality cannot be seen as totally dependent on an international focus, however, since many South African and African health concerns have international relevance. Editors and editorial boards need to make their vision for their journals clear regarding the content being South African, African or international.

The influence of an editor is significant. Generally, the format, process and 'feel' of a journal are strongly shaped by the editor. She/he controls the non-peer-reviewed content to a large extent; in some journals, the rejection rates of research articles before they are peer-reviewed is substantial. The processes for, and appointment periods of, editors seem to be a general problem. It is understood that these are difficult positions to fill, and approaching a hand-picked person may indeed be the only way to obtain a reliable person for a (usually) unpaid, demanding position. Not stipulating a period of office does not allow for a regular review of the editorial functioning of a journal, and an open-ended appointment period for an editor in small academic and professional communities makes change very difficult. It is recommended that, at the very least, a period of office be stipulated for each editor appointment while, if possible, an open process of selection and appointment be used.

Some of the journals in this group are exclusively research journals, e.g. *Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery*, while others have a dual role covering both general professional articles and research articles, e.g. *South African Family Practice*. Since many of the journals are published by specialty and sub-specialty groups and a particular publication may be the only one available to the discipline, a combination of article content is probably necessary. This approach may also lead to research articles being available to readers who otherwise might not choose to receive exclusively research-based journals. For these reasons, journals should be encouraged to develop their value-adding content, such as book reviews, obituaries, profiles, policy briefs and commentaries.

The level of non-peer-reviewed or non-research content should be viewed in the context of the number of issues published per year. A higher frequency of journal publication allows the total number of research articles to be at an acceptable level even when such articles do not make up the bulk of a journal issue. For instance, if a journal is published monthly, with an average of two peer-reviewed articles per issue, about 24 articles can therefore be published each year. If, however, a journal publishes only two peer-reviewed articles per issue and is only published twice a year, only four peer-reviewed articles are published; this is not an acceptable contribution. The fewer the issues, the higher the proportion of peer-reviewed content should be. Another factor influencing a judgement about the adequacy of the research content is the size of the potential author base: some disciplines are smaller than others, and have fewer postgraduates and academics.

Editorial boards and editors need to make the issue of the listing of their journals in search engines and indexes a priority. The issue of whether a journal is indexed and in which indexes was not always clear from the completed questionnaires submitted by editors. While access to some of the journals has been greatly increased by publishing them online, the fact remains that, unless they are indexed in recognised databases, relevant articles will not easily be found or identified by users, and will consequently become irrelevant, i.e. lost to the literature. This is a major factor influencing the quality of a journal. Editors are encouraged to ensure that authors include reference lists at all times as this enhances further indexability of the articles through search engines and indexes.

There are few countries in Africa that have such a variety of good-quality locally published health science journals available to their health practitioners and scientists as is the case in South Africa (SA). The professional organisations that initiate these publications and maintain them against all odds should be commended. While the review panel has made a range of recommendations to improve the individual journals, it considers them as a group to be an important scientific resource to local health scientists.

# 3

## Panel Members

- I. Prof John Duncan, (Chairperson), Member of ASSAf, consultant/researcher in Higher Education, retired Dean of Research at Rhodes University.
- II. Prof Robin Emsley, Head of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Stellenbosch, advisor in directing research activities and the Mental Health Information Centre.
- III. Prof Amanda Lochner, Professor in the Division of Medical Physiology, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences at Stellenbosch University.
- IV. (Late) Prof Leana Uys, Member of ASSAf, Chief Executive Officer of the Forum of University Nursing Heads in South Africa in Pretoria, Professor Emeritus of Nursing at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- V. Prof Alan Rothberg, School of Therapeutic Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand.
- VI. Prof John Pettifor, Member of ASSAf, paediatrician and Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand and Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital.

Director of the Scholarly Publishing Unit (SPU): Mrs Susan Veldsman

Servicing Project Officer, SPU: Ms Gugulethu Mtsweni



# 4

## Consensus Reviews of Journals in the Group

### 4.1. Multi-disciplinary

#### 4.1.1 *South African Medical Journal*

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Medical Journal (SAMJ)* is published under the auspices of the South African Medical Association, though it enjoys full editorial autonomy. The *SAMJ* provides a premier vehicle for the publication of medical research in South Africa and beyond, provides high-quality educational material for doctors, informs the medical profession and the public on relevant health issues, provides a forum for members of the profession to voice their opinions, influences opinion and policy through the authority, relevance and quality of its contents, and is an important source of advertising and obtaining information about professional appointments.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editors are South African, and have a high national and international standing. Their expertise is widespread and they are geographically located throughout the country.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 123 years (since 1884). The journal experienced interruptions in publication in the very early years but has been continuous since 1905. The number of peer-reviewed original papers published during the period September 2006 to October 2009 is 279, as well as 349 letter-type articles. The *SAMJ* includes content that does not readily fit into these categories but has nevertheless been categorised accordingly, as follows: published articles were 279 (includes scientific letters), while letter-type articles were 349 (includes editorials, 1 - 2 per issue); *izindaba* (researched medico-political matters), 3 - 4 per issue; forum (usually related to practice, policies, opinion etc.), 4 per issue; reviews are generally not accepted by the *SAMJ*; and 10 National Guidelines were published during this period.

For the year to date (10 issues), 557 submissions were received and 178 items published. The published items included others than those listed above, e.g. correspondence, obituaries and book reviews. Well in excess of 50% of submissions are rejected prior to peer review. Of 200 recent submissions, 88 were published and 112 rejected. However, of those published, editorials, *izindaba*, obituaries, etc. had close to 100% acceptance.

In 2008, 267 forum items were submitted for peer review – one was declined; 317 research articles were peer-reviewed – 82% were accepted; and 127 scientific letters were peer-reviewed – 91% accepted. Therefore, if not initially rejected by the editors' advisory group, and if subsequently sent for peer review, these papers stand a much higher chance of acceptance than new submissions overall.

Approximately 5% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address. One to three peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. Approximately 100 peer reviewers were used in the period under review. Less than 5% of them had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 120 days for both print and online. The publication frequency of the journal is monthly, with 12 issues per year. Journal issues are pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates, and they appear regularly as scheduled.

The editor at the time of this review had held the position for 17 years; he was appointed competitively. The appointment period currently is by annual review by the board. Members of the editorial board are not appointed competitively, and their office term is not specified. Editorial board members from both inside and outside the country are appointed, to provide specific topical expertise. They handle manuscripts and advise on editorial policy.

The journal contains a conflict-of-interest policy, and editorial guidelines are published online. The editorial/policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. *Errata* are published when they have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews, and correspondence on published articles and other matters. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is about 60-70%.

**Content: Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal publishes high-quality articles, and a substantial number per annum. These represent a good sample of the best work done in the country, other than in surgery and paediatrics, which generally is diverted by the *SAMJ* to the *South African Journal of Surgery* and the *South African Journal of Child Health*. Published articles are predominantly by South African authors, but about 5% are international contributors/co-authors. Their contributions to the *SAMJ* were mostly in niche areas of medicine of importance in South Africa. There were a few contributions that covered topics of research in other African countries and outside the continent. Many omissions still exist regarding work conducted in the country, however; this may be due to the widespread preference among authors to publish in overseas peer-reviewed journals.

More papers by junior researchers should be encouraged to ensure a more collaborative mindset among various disciplines when addressing clinical problems in South Africa.

There was a good alignment of the topics covered relative to national priorities for health. However, the proportion was not quantifiable.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, and scholarly correspondence. All scientific contributions have proper English abstracts. *Errata* are published when necessary. Citation practice is good. Good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are evident.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** Excellent suitability as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduates. The journal has a very good comparability with leading international journals in the field. Students and junior graduates, as well as established researchers/clinicians, should be encouraged to read the journal. The journal provides a service for completing a questionnaire in each issue towards gaining continuous professional development (CPD) points.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** A negative issue is that submissions of paediatric-related research are often diverted to the *South African Journal of Child Health*, which is not PubMed-listed. In general, this is a good South African medical journal.

Consideration should be given to internationalising the editorial board and the reviewers to promote greater visibility of the journal. State-of-the-art laboratory-based research to address mechanisms and biochemical pathways, and statistical analysis to broaden the scope of clinical problems being addressed, should be encouraged.

A 50% rejection of manuscripts by the editors' advisory group is a problem; it is suggested that a broader base of reviewers be used in reviewing manuscripts.

**Business aspects**

The print run is 16 000 copies per issue, and the publisher is the Health and Medical Publishing Group (HMPG), the publishing arm of the South African Medical Association (SAMA). Both production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising, but it does not receive financial sponsorship. All recipients of the journal are paying subscribers, of whom 250 are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal appears free online (open access), and is also part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism.



The journal has received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The copyright arrangement is adopted from the Creative Commons Attribution (free non-commercial).

The journal is indexed in Thomson Reuters Web of Science (WoS), and an impact factor has been determined for the journal. All articles are published in English, and include abstracts. The journal had never been independently peer-reviewed before the present instance.

The journal is currently published on the ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa open access platform.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should continue to publish on the SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.1.2 *Southern African Journal of Critical Care (SAJCC)*

**Focus and Scope:** The *SAJCC* is the official journal of the Critical Care Society of Southern Africa (CCSA) and is sent to members of the society, intensive care nurses, paramedics and medical practitioners.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editors have a high national/international disciplinary standing. They represent a good cross-section of national institutions and notable academic people in the field working in this country. While one member of the board is from the international fraternity (Israel), there is no rotation of the role of the editor. The risk of only addressing South African agenda should be reduced by greater involvement of other countries in Southern Africa, as the name indicates.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 26 years (since 1985), without significant interruptions in publication. The number of articles published during the period under review comprised 12 letter-type articles and 16 reviews. In the same period, 48 manuscripts were received. In total, 10 manuscripts were rejected without peer review. Only two published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually, two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In one year, the number of peer reviewers used was eight, none of whom had a non-South African address. The peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and on the web is 150 days. The publication frequency of the journal is two issues per year. Issues appear regularly on given dates as pre-scheduled.

The editor has been editing the journal for 12 years. He was appointed by the CCSSA; however, the appointment was not competitive. The appointment period is not specified. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively and their appointment period is also not specified. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts, provide specific topical expertise, and advise on editorial policies/practices. The board members appointed are from both inside and outside the country.

The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines, and there is a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 60%.

**Content:** Quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.

**Consensus Review:** Articles are published from both the medical and nursing disciplines, focusing on a wide variety of topics. Two issues are published per annum, with 3 - 4 articles per issue. The articles provide evidence of solid research with sound recommendations. However, articles appear to come from a small number of institutions. The articles predominantly published originate mostly from authors at the Universities of Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal, the Witwatersrand and Pretoria. The quality of research articles published is good but not excellent. There has been a decline in the quality and num-

ber of research/academic articles published in the journal. This is concerning as it might be difficult to address if it continues beyond the turning point. The journal should set itself the objective of attracting international authors. The number of research articles can be increased, considering the number that are rejected. Editors and reviewers should support authors in their efforts towards successful publishing. The articles are a varying mix of material; editorials usually introducing a theme featured in a specific issue; a handful of research-based original articles often grouped under the theme concerned; case reports; opinion pieces; book reviews; and obituaries. They are generally scholarly and evidence-based, and above continuous professional development (CPD) standard. The impression is one of a very underpowered but serious academic journal seeking to increase knowledge and improve practice. Most good work on critical care is published overseas, and it seems that only a small number of local specialists in this field support the journal.

The journal has many good features and may be considered a helpful contributor to the discipline, but it is too fragmented to be a significant force for advancement of knowledge and improvement of professional practice.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The editorials and reviews touch on current clinical or health-related issues/problems and serve to highlight dangers and/or new approaches to care and treatment. Good English is the rule, and all articles are accompanied by an abstract.

Publication of *errata* occurs when the need arises. Good citation practice, using a consistent style and reference list of sources, is maintained. Presentations are well structured.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** While the journal deals with practical issues, provides evidence-based knowledge and serves as a reference source for graduates and current post-basic students, it is too underpowered to be comparable with the better international exemplars.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** Suggestions for consideration are extending the feeding source of the journal to practitioners from private hospitals and other training institutions and possibly publishing more articles per edition, if the terms of reference and cost implications allow for it.

Broadening the scope to involve more national authors, as well as those from neighbouring countries and internationally. Participation in the development goals and processes as set by ASSAf.

International advisors and editorial experts could be brought on board. Newer and innovative ideas, i.e. value-added features, as well as extending the number of reviewers to include more researchers could be considered. This will address the risk of publication bias and provides opportunity to develop reviewing and academic writing skills of younger researchers.

### **Business aspects**

The journal's regular print run is 1 930 copies per issue; it is published by Health and Medical Publishing Group (HMPG). Both the production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries paid advertising, but not unpaid advertising. The journal does not receive financial sponsorship.

The journal has 770 paying subscribers, of whom seven are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal appears online as free online (open access).

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The copyright arrangement is adopted from the Creative Commons Attribution (non-commercial). The journal is published in English only. The journal has never been independently peer-reviewed before this instance. In principle, the editor would be interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

### 4.1.3 *Medical Technology SA*

**Focus and Scope:** *Medical Technology SA* is published half-yearly for the Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists of South Africa. Papers on any aspect of medical laboratory science or related disciplines are considered on merit and are subject to peer review.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** This is difficult to judge in the absence of detailed information about the full editorial board. Both editors-in-chief work at institutions teaching and training in the broad medical technology field.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 22 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 20 peer-reviewed original papers. In the same period, 25 manuscripts were received. No manuscripts were rejected without peer review. About 10% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. About 16 reviewers were used in total per year. None of these reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 3 - 6 months for print and online. The publication frequency of the journal is two issues per year. Although issues of the journal are scheduled to be published regularly on pre-scheduled dates, they do not always appear on time.

The editor has been editing the journal for four years and was not appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. The editor's appointment period is undetermined. Editorial board members are also not appointed competitively and are appointed for an undetermined period from inside the country. They provide specific topical expertise, handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial guidelines but has no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines are aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal publishes *errata* should they become apparent. The journal contains editorials as scholarly value-adding feature. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 90% (the balance of 10% includes advertisements from pharmaceutical companies, to cover costs).

**Content:** quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.

**Consensus Review:** In general, the quality of articles published is good but researchers still prefer to submit to international accredited journals. There has been an increase in the number of articles published per annum over the last two years, and in general the work is representative of a strong local interest. However, most of the articles could easily appear in mainstream pathology journals, and only a handful seem to concentrate on technology issues rather than new insights into the pathophysiology of locally prevalent diseases. There is also a feeling that the preceding peer reviews might not have been conducted by established leaders in the field concerned. The focus may be detrimental to the scholarly standing of the journal as one devoted to medical technology. There are about five peer-reviewed articles per issue, and about 10 per annum. This is very little, considering the number and scope of the different sub-specialties concerning the topic, including anatomical pathology, medical virology and microbiology, chemical pathology, immunology, haematology, etc. The number of articles is not adequate.

**Essential technical features:** English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation

**Consensus Review:** Each issue has an editorial and the number of topical reviews has increased annually. There is proper English usage, and articles are accompanied by abstracts. No *errata* were noted. Proper citation practice was implemented in 2011 using the AOSIS open journal system for manuscript submission.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus Review:** Although the intended focus is not observed in the articles published, it is a useful publication for capacity development of academics and students locally. Although the number of articles published is low, the journal contains a reasonable spread and is well edited.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** The journal should clarify the meaning of its title and specify its focus and purpose. It should seek to stimulate genuine studies of problems and possible solutions in medical technology and publish these from wherever they come, in this country or further afield. It should separate itself from other types of topic, such as medical equipment issues and the specialised (medical) technologies of medical specialties, such as oncology, radiology, surgery, etc. It should seek actively to become a respected journal in its defined field of focus. The peer-review mechanisms should also be adapted to the above changed system.

### Business aspects

The regular print run of the journal is twice per annum. It is published by the Society of Medical Technologists of South Africa. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries paid and unpaid advertising, and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 1 500. Some 200 are organisation subscribers (including pharmaceutical companies, universities, Health Professions Council of South Africa, etc.). The journal appears free online (open access) as *Medical Technology SA*. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Submission of an item for possible publication implies that the material has not been published and has not been submitted for consideration elsewhere, and a statement to this effect signed by all the authors should be included in the covering letter (See instructions to authors).

The journal is not indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS or the ProQuest International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS). Articles are usually in English. The journal has never been independently peer-reviewed previously. The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free online, open-access journal.

### Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

## 4.2 Primary Health Care/Nursing

### 4.2.1 *Health SA Gesondheid*

**Focus and Scope:** *Health SA Gesondheid* is an accredited interdisciplinary research journal that publishes only selected articles of the highest scientific standard, with human health as the main theme. The journal accepts research and review articles on this theme. The journal aims to contribute to the development of the health sciences. Through interchange and co-operation between health professions, the journal aims to develop a relevant, effective health service delivery system in Southern Africa through research. The journal also aims to facilitate the gathering and critical testing of insights and viewpoints on knowledge from different disciplines involved in health service delivery. Journal articles express the authors' views and are not necessarily the views of *Health SA Gesondheid*. Articles may be written in either Afrikaans or English. The journal publishes independently refereed articles.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editor is a respected academic, and the editorial board represents a range of health disciplines.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 15 years (1994 - 2009), without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 61 peer-reviewed original papers, eight

book reviews and two reports/overviews. In the same period, 158 manuscripts were received. When authors are in doubt whether the article is suitable for the journal, the article is screened by *Health SA Gesondheid* before formal submission. About eight published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address, and another eight had student authors.

Usually three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. For 2008, there were initially 175 reviewer allocations, and evaluations were completed by 132 reviewers. Only two reviewers had non-South African addresses. Although the managing editor has records for the last two years, there is a possibility of incomplete reviewer records.

In 2009, the average period from acceptance of a manuscript to publication on the web was 164 days (5.4 months), while the average period from receipt of manuscript to publication was 325 days (10.8 months). The publication frequency of the journal prior to 2009 was four issues per year, but from 2009 it has been produced as an online rolling publication, i.e. individual articles are published as soon as they are ready for publication by adding them to the table of contents of the current volume and issue. This system is also known as 'article-by-article' publication.

The editor-in-chief has been editing the journal for eight months and was managing editor for 12 months, although she has been involved with the journal for longer. The editor-in-chief was appointed competitively following a selection process. The position is permanent on a part-time basis. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively, but are appointed as experts within an area of health care. They are appointed to handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial policy/author guidelines, which include a conflict-of-interest policy. The reviewers indicate acceptance of an article for reviewing via the website. The editor-in-chief is not aware whether the editorial/policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal publishes *errata* where these become apparent. The journal had until 2008 contained only editorials as a scholarly value-adding feature. The percentage of pages in each issue representing peer-reviewed original material ranges from 90-95%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The articles are generally of good quality but it is concerning that authors from the institutions represented on the editorial board dominate.

The topics of the articles appeared very relevant to the local burden of disease and health system issues. There are virtually no published articles from international authors, and there is a skewed pattern of submissions from within South Africa, as well as submissions from nurses and qualitative and descriptive studies being in the majority.

In terms of the quality of the studies, the international status and origin of the authors and studies and the level of the editorial board, the journal is not comparable with the best internationally.

While the articles may not represent the best research produced nationally, they make a good contribution to the local literature, since the journal definitely has a very strong national focus. The field of publication is very wide, therefore the number of articles in specific sub-fields or sub-sections was sometimes limited.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The absence of an editorial since 2009 is striking. It makes the journal seem impersonal and limits the probability of a specific vision being pursued. None of the other additional features is present.

Proper abstracts are provided in English and Afrikaans and are unstructured. The quality and length of the abstracts vary and could be improved and better structured. The journal is online, and easy to access. The articles are attractively presented, and the online format makes it possible to increase the font size. The citation practice and presentation are generally good.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus Review:** The journal is an attractive publication option for Masters level and even doctoral students, as well as junior academics. It publishes relevant local research articles that should be useful for local graduates.

The journal does not compare with leading international journals and would be better compared to similar regional or national journals. At this level, it is a good journal.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** The journal's first goal should be to expand the use by, and submissions from, a wider cross-section of academics and institutions in South Africa, including a wider variety of disciplines outside of nursing. One strategy might be to broaden the editorial board, but active recruitment of authors through health sciences faculties might also be useful, especially targeting the disciplines now absent in the journal, such as medicine, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and optometry. It would also be useful to have somewhat more information about the editorial board on the webpage.

The journal is not listed on the Web of Science, PubMed or Elsevier Scopus. The fact that it is now open access is a 'plus' in terms of its accessibility to national and international readers.

There is scope to publish other types of material – editorials, book reviews, letters, conference reports and proceedings, reviews, and CPD material. Inclusion of critical-analytical editorial comments reflecting on journal content, news, and new policies and legislation affecting the field of publication, and some scholarly debate on articles, would add value.

One further consideration is the name of the journal – *Health SA Gesondheid*. The name is unattractive to the broader national and international audience and says little about the focus of the journal. It is recommended that the editorial board consider dropping this name in favour of the secondary title 'Journal of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences'. If the possibility of developing the journal in the longer term as an African journal that provides opportunity for publication from academics throughout sub-Saharan Africa is considered, a title such as 'African Journal of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences' might also be appropriate.

The journal requires a structured and more consistent abstract format. It is also recommended that the requirement of an Afrikaans abstract be dropped to attract international authors. It cannot be expected of international authors to produce an Afrikaans abstract.

### Business aspects

The journal is published online only. Before the world of open access, the journal was printed four times a year. Four issues were released, in March, June, September and December, during the past three years. In the new (online) environment, the journal operates by rolling publication. It is published by Open Journal Publishing (OJP). Both production and distribution are outsourced. The journal does not carry either paid or unpaid advertising, and does not receive financial sponsorship as it belongs to the University of Johannesburg.

The journal provides free online access; therefore it has no paying subscribers. In 2006, prior to open access publishing, there were 48 individual and 11 organisational subscriptions; in 2007, there were subscriptions from 39 individuals and 10 organisations; and in 2008 there were 34 and 14 subscribers, respectively. The journal is also published on the suite of Sabinet SA ePublications databases, a commercial e-publication platform. The journal levies page fees, which are adjusted on an annual basis. The University of Johannesburg receives a percentage from every page printed.

Copyright on published articles is retained by the author(s). The exclusive responsibility for acknowledging author's rights and/or copyright rests with the responsible author(s). The editor and reviewers of this journal do not accept responsibility for the infringement of author's rights or copyright. The author grants the publisher unlimited rights to publish the work in any format and/or medium, whether for gain or any other purpose. Articles are usually in English, but front details such as titles, authors, addresses and English abstracts are mandatory.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

**4.2.2 South African Family Practice (SAFP)**

**Focus and Scope:** *South African Family Practice* is published by Medpharm Publications, an independently owned South African publisher in the medical and pharmaceutical field. *SAFP*, incorporating *Geneeskunde (SAFP/G)* is a peer-reviewed scientific journal that strives to provide primary care physicians and researchers with a broad range of scholarly work in the disciplines of family medicine, primary health care, rural medicine, district health and other related fields. The journal publishes original research, clinical reviews, and pertinent commentary that advance the knowledge base of these disciplines. The content of *SAFP/G* is designed to reflect and support further development of the broad basis of general medical practice through original research and critical review of evidence in important clinical areas, as well as to provide practitioners with continuing professional development material.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal has an editor-in-chief and one associate editor, who both have national profiles. The editor-in-chief has numerous research outputs (journal articles and books), has graduated many MMeds and holds editorial positions on journals in the United Kingdom, Nigeria and Malaysia. The associate editor is the managing director of MedPharm Publications, the latter producing a number of journals that represent a number of societies.

The rest of the editorial board consists of heads of the Departments of Family Medicine at various universities. Not all of them are noted researchers. The board has about an equal number of national and international board members.

**Questionnaire:** The journal started as *Geneeskunde* 50 years ago. The journal *South African Family Practice* was founded in 1980. The two journals merged in 2003, and subsequently have been published as *SA Family Practice*. The journal has never experienced significant interruptions in publication.

Six issues are published per annum, and 15 original peer-reviewed articles were published in 2009. In the same period, about 17 reviews, invited reviews, open forum, and case reports were also published. Approximately four opinion pieces, guest editorials, letters to the editor, scientific letters, comments on clinical trials, brief reports, and protocols for debate were also published in 2009. In the same period, 41 original research manuscripts and 36 reviews, invited reviews, open forum, and case reports, and seven manuscripts for opinions, guest editorials, letters to the editor, scientific letters, comments on clinical trials, brief reports, and protocols for debate were received. Approximately 12 original research manuscripts were declined without peer review.

Three published original research papers had at least one international author. A minimum of two peer reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript. In the period under review, 187 peer reviewers were used, of whom 45 had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained on the online journal system (OJS).

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in 2008 was 64 days to review completion and 269 days to online publication. The publication frequency of the journal is bimonthly. Journal issues are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates, and they appear regularly on the scheduled dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for 10 years, and was appointed through direct recruitment for a period of four years. Members of the editorial board are appointed competitively for a period of three years. They are from both inside and outside the country. Editorial board members handle manuscripts and advise on editorial policy. Board members are not appointed to provide any specific topical expertise. The journal contains a conflict-of-interest policy, and editorial guidelines are published; these are in line with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published when they become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is about 60%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The articles are of an acceptable quality. A proportion of the articles are review articles (not research). These seem to be more than merely a summary of textbook information, and use is made of more recent publications on the topic under review. Authors do not make extensive use of evidence-based medicine and Cochrane review publications.

The journal definitely has a very strong national focus. The authors are almost exclusively South African, and come from a reasonably wide range of provinces and institutions. Most of the authors are academics from medical schools, and include pharmacists, family physicians and others.

The journal publishes a good number of articles per annum, but probably not the best work done in the country in the discipline, as the *SAMJ*, given its PubMed status, would probably be the SA journal of choice for submissions.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is well-rounded and appears to offer a place for opinion and discussion relevant to the readership. The editorial provides interesting commentary on issues relevant to South Africa, e.g. National Health Insurance (NHI), gender-based violence, xenophobia, etc. The editorial is used for comment and to invoke commitment on the part of the readership to positive change in South Africa.

Abstracts in English are provided for all articles. In one issue, a loose page contained an erratum. Reference lists contain quite a few format inconsistencies. The presentation and layout are generally good. The differentiation between peer-reviewed articles and those not peer-reviewed is relatively clear.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal produces a high number of articles – both the research type and the review for practice (CPD) variety – on an annual basis. They cover a broad range of issues relevant to primary care/general practice/family medicine in South Africa. The review (CPD) articles are good, and the research articles cover a broad range of issues relevant to both private and public sector doctors. The aim of the journal is to provide a forum for South African family physicians, and it appears to do this very well. The reviews are probably useful for family medicine practitioners. The journal also provides a 'service' to the profession to keep them up to date as part of the Continuing Professional Development Programme of the Health Professions Council of South Africa. A procedure for completing questionnaires to be reviewed to gain CPD points is another service provided.

The journal provides an accessible publishing opportunity for academics and students.

In terms of the quality of the studies, the international status and origin of the authors and studies and the level of the editorial board, the journal is not comparable with the best internationally. The studies are generally small and almost peripheral in some ways. However, it is a national journal providing an acceptable service to its constituency.

**Suggested improvements**

The journal should attempt to increase the international scope of its authors and origin of studies reported, while its editorial board should strive to improve the quality of articles accepted for publication.

Better differentiation for advertorials could be made.

It is also limiting that the print copies do not contain the full text of these particular articles.

**Business aspects**

The publisher is Medpharm Publications ([www.medpharm.co.za](http://www.medpharm.co.za)); the print run is 5 500 copies per issue. Production is handled in-house, while distribution is outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising, and it also receives financial sponsorship. The number of paying subscribers is 928 members of the SA Academy of Family Medicine and 67 private subscribers, which brings the total to 995 subscribers. The journal appears free online (open access), and is also part of a commercial e-publication service through Elsevier Scopus.



The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The copyright arrangements are adopted from Creative Commons Attribution – Non-commercial – No Derivative Works 2.5 South African License.

The journal is indexed in Elsevier Scopus, and its impact factor has been determined by Elsevier Scopus. All articles are published in English and include abstracts. The journal had been independently peer-reviewed before by Index Copernicus.

The journal is already available as a free, open-access, online journal published on the open journal system (OJS) platform. The editors would be interested in having the abstracts indexed if this creates additional traffic on their current website, such as African Index Medicus, African Journals Online, Sabinet SA ePublications, etc.

#### Panel's consensus view

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.2.3 Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery

**Focus and Scope:** The *Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery* is a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal that seeks the submission of unpublished articles on current nursing and health-related issues. It encourages debate, both theoretical and practical, on a wide range of topics that represent a variety of cross-disciplinary interests. The *Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery* is interested in attracting submissions that exhibit innovative qualitative and quantitative research methods and approaches. What is of particular interest to the journal is research that supports high-level research teaching and learning that is fresh, exciting, analytical, critical, controversial, stimulating and creative. The journal is cognisant of the need for capacity building in the area of scholarly writing and publication among novice writers. It is also committed to the acceleration and development of capacity among marginalised groups, including those from developing countries, with particular emphasis on Africa. While the *Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery* challenges contributors to use innovative, provocative and creative ways of presenting and reporting their research, the journal encourages authors to write clearly, logically and systematically so that their content is accessible to a wide readership, including individuals who may not be familiar with the subject matter under discussion.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The members of the editorial board are respected nurse academics drawn from South Africa, with a separate international advisory board (IAB). Ex-South Africans previously formed a large proportion of the IAB. More recently, the number of IAB members has been increased to 12 international members, none of whom are ex-South Africans. The journal also publishes a list of reviewers, of whom 30% are from South Africa. Both the current and previous editor are well known and respected in the profession.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 13 years, since 1998. There has never been any interruption in publication, with two issues published per annum. Usually, nine research peer-reviewed articles are published per issue; and, in the period under review, 54 peer-reviewed articles were published. Twenty-nine reviewers are used each year, of whom 11 were South African. The current editor was not appointed competitively through advertisement, but was appointed at a departmental meeting because she had been involved with the journal since its inception in 1998 and she wanted an opportunity to expand publication opportunities and platforms for exchanging ideas among nurses and midwives and other healthcare givers throughout Africa. The editor is appointed for three years or longer, and the members of the editorial board are selected on the basis of their intellectual standing for three years; they handle manuscripts and advise on editorial policy. Editorial guidelines are published and are in the process of being aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. There was no conflict-of-interest policy in 2009, but this was planned for the future.

Peer review is compulsory, requiring two per manuscript, and if disagreement arises, a third reviewer and an editor is used (3 - 4 reviewers per manuscript). Fifty-four articles were published in the review period and 84 were received in the same period. If the editor submits an article, one of the editorial board handles the blind review. Of the 84 manuscripts submitted, six were rejected without peer review. About 50% of manuscripts received were from African countries other than South Africa. Peer-

review reports are retained in the archives. The rejection rate is about half of the manuscripts received. Issues appear biannually at the end of July and December. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 12 months as only two issues are published per year.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The articles focus on continental nursing, midwifery and health services issues, and are useful for policy and practice development in the continent.

Very few authors represent various African countries, with about half coming from outside South Africa. Authors from Unisa feature strongly among the South African authors, and even conference reports are from this university.

The quality of the articles is generally adequate to good, but some articles would have benefited from more stringent editing, especially regarding methodology. A very large proportion of the articles are descriptive and exploratory studies.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** English abstracts are provided for all articles, but other value-added features are limited. The editorial has recently not been used to highlight issues or content, but rather administrative matters. While citations are not always in a consistent format and large blank spaces sometimes appear, the journal's presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are generally good. *Errata* were not found in the reviewed journals.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is written in an accessible language style and is an accessible publishing opportunity for academics and students. In terms of the quality of the studies, and the international status and origin of the authors and studies, the journal is an international publication that compares well with other published African journals or continental journals, such as the *Australian Nursing Journal*. There is some evidence that authors from other countries are beginning to submit articles for publication in this journal, i.e. Thailand.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The editorial board and the review panel contain many Unisa staff. While named *Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery*, very few individuals from other African countries are listed. Credibility as an African journal would need a better representation from the continent, at least in the editorial board if not the review panel – taking into account the state of scholarly productivity in nursing in the rest of Africa. A few prestigious international members would be beneficial, and integrating the IAB with the editorial board might allow more direct input.

An effort should be made to include more value-adding features, e.g. reviews of nursing and midwifery books published in Africa. There is little opportunity for advertising such books continentally, and the journal could play a role in this regard. All recent issues contain book reviews.

Regarding conference reports, it might be important to discuss what would be useful to report. To allow readers to 'get a feel' for which conferences they might want to try to attend in the future, reviews might have to address issues such as whether the conference is recurrent, whether it is aimed at practitioners or researchers, and where (on the web) information about future conferences can be found. Another aspect might be new trends identified during the conference. A format for such reviews might be useful.

**Business aspects**

The publisher is the Unisa Press. The print run is 500 copies per issue, with 100 subscribers, of whom 20 are organisations. Production and distribution are done internally. The journal is not indexed on the IBSS system. The journal is published on Unisa's institutional repository. Every corresponding author signs a declaration for copyright of published articles.

The journal is also indexed by Sabinet SA ePublications and by EBSCO since 2012.

The editor is open to negotiations to have the journal join the new SciELO-South Africa platform of free-online, high-quality, fully indexed South African journals.

Elsevier has approached the editor and a number of meetings with them were held but, due to various difficulties such as sustainability, costs, etc., alternative options are currently under consideration.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.2.4 *Curationis*

**Focus and Scope:** *Curationis* provides a forum for cutting-edge theories, models and research related to the exploration of issues experienced and the best practices of nurses and midwives so as to improve nursing education, nursing administration and community nursing within Africa.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editorial team is generally regarded as of good standing within the country. The fact that international experts do not serve on the editorial board, but on a separate advisory board, and the fact that students and community members serve as full editorial board members, is an anomaly that should be addressed, as this limits the scope of the editorial board in terms of expert subject and scientific knowledge.

Reviewers are listed in the journal and are many and varied in their backgrounds.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 33 years, since 1978, and the frequency of publication is four times per year. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear in March, June, September and December. There has never been serious interruption in publication but there was sometimes a delay in the date of publication. Articles published in the review period were mostly original except for two reviews. Six manuscripts were rejected without peer review as they did not fall within the scope of *Curationis*. About 95% of the published articles have a South African author/s; the remaining 5% are non-South African authors, some of whom have been students at SA universities but conducted the fieldwork for their research in their own countries.

Generally, two reviewers are approached per article and their response is expected within three days. If one indicates his/her non-availability, another reviewer is approached. About 40 peer reviewers were used in the review period; this number is due to the need for specialists in the different areas/scope of specialisations. Almost all of them are in South Africa as the journal publishes original research from Africa except for two instances where one reviewer was a South African working in Canada and another was a member of the international advisory panel. The peer-review reports are retained in an archive. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is 12 weeks (three months). The time period depends on the quality of the manuscripts received.

The editor-in-chief has held that position since the end of 2007. Some members handle peer review of the journals while the entire board advises on editorial policies and practices. Members of the board are nominated from the professional bodies of the organisation, such as the Democratic Nursing Organisation of SA (DENOSA). The Forum of University Nursing Deans of South Africa (FUNDISA) has three representatives, and nursing colleges are represented by two members.

The editorial guidelines are published at the back of every issue. There is no conflict-of-interest policy. The policies were developed some time previously, and most of the principles are in accordance with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. However, the publishers are currently in the process of reviewing policies, owing to migration to an electronic journal. The journal publishes *errata* in all cases where these have become apparent, and editorials appear in every issue. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is invariably 90 - 100%.

**Content:** quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The content of the journal is generally rated as good and relevant. Most of the articles are from South African authors from a wide range of institutions, and mainly from nurses. However,

authors other than nurses also publish on health issues, and a number of articles focus on the rest of Africa. The large number of descriptive, qualitative and explorative studies was identified as a concern. Another concern was the standardised template style of writing that seems to be associated with the student status of the authors.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Although the technical features were generally satisfactory, very few additional features were included. The editorial no longer addresses a theme, but only reflects the content of the edition. The layout is sometimes clumsy, and referencing is not always consistent.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/junior staff in the discipline concerned. The language is very accessible to students and junior staff and yet not too simplistic for senior staff to appreciate. Its content is general rather than specialisation-focused, which is understandable as there is not a critical mass of scholarly activity in the country to accommodate specialist nursing journals.

*Curationis* compares favourably with similar national nursing journals. In fact, it has a wider focus than most of these, and also includes international editorial board members. However, the rate of publication over the last few years has been very low – less than five issues per annum.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** *Curationis* is the country's oldest nursing research journal. It is recommended that it positions itself more strongly as an international journal; this would expose junior South African researchers to a much broader perspective of what serious research entails.

DENOSA should consider appointing an editor via a competitive process, and perhaps also appointing one or two deputy editors to assist in quality control and in pursuing the publication of more articles per annum. The current publication rate is not adequate.

The IAB may serve a better purpose if it is integrated with the editorial board, where the former will be more accessible to the board and have a more direct input. It may also benefit the journal to strengthen the expertise on the editorial board.

Technically, a reference list across the page instead of in columns might save some space. The articles also need more careful editing, including ensuring consistent referencing methods. Layout should receive attention to improve the quality.

The statement that web-based references are not scholarly should be reconsidered by the editorial board.

The journal would definitely benefit from being included in the SciELO initiative. It is the oldest nursing research journal in Africa, and has served the profession well during the first few decades of research activity. It should now receive the support necessary to progress into the new publishing era.

The Panel believes that the journal should offer more value-adding features.

### **Business aspects**

The publisher is DENOSA. The print run is 300 copies per issue. Production is outsourced and distribution is done from home. The journal does not carry any advertising. DENOSA publishes a second journal that carries advertisements, entitled *Nursing Update*. *Curationis* has 139 individual paying subscribers and 38 institutional subscribers.

The journal was not online during the period under review, but has since migrated to being an online journal. Each author submitting a manuscript for publication has to sign a copyright form to transfer article ownership to the organisation after publication. The journal was independently peer-reviewed before 2007. The editor is in principle interested in being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

In the light of the new online format of the journal, it should now receive the support to move into the new publishing era, which provides an excellent opportunity for development.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DoHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### **4.2.5 African Journal of Primary Health Care and Family Medicine**

**Focus and scope:** The *African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine* (PHCFM) welcomes submissions that encourage scholarly exchange between family medicine and primary health care researchers and practitioners across Africa, while providing a contextual and holistic view of family medicine as practised across the continent. It publishes articles in either English or French. The journal is intended for primary health care practitioners, family medicine specialists and academics from both the developing and developed worlds, and offers an engaging insight into the growth of these disciplines from a distinctly African perspective.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

The editorial board is spread across Africa and has a good representation of international board members. The editorial board members are of high standing and well distributed, both locally and internationally. They are mainly from the profession of medicine and the editor is highly regarded nationally and internationally.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published since 2009 and no interruptions in publication were experienced. It publishes one issue per year online, with new articles added as soon as they are accepted. The number of articles published during the period under review was 21 articles in 2010, 25 articles in 2011, 26 articles in 2012, one letter-type article in 2010, one letter-type article in 2011, and one review in 2010. More than 197 manuscripts were received in the period 2010-2012. Of these, 67 were rejected without peer review. Fifty-two per cent of the authors of the 129 published articles had a non-South African address.

Two reviewers were approached for each submitted manuscript. In 2012, 63 peer reviewers were used, of whom 50% had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained on the AOSIS open journals system. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is six months; however, content is freely available for download. The publication frequency of the journal is one issue per year. Individual articles are published as soon as they are ready for publication by adding them to the table of contents of the current volume and issue (the system known as 'rolling publication' or 'article-by-article' publication).

Editors are appointed competitively following a selection process by the editorial board; the current editor has been editing the journal since January 2013. Editorial board members are also appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. They are also appointed for a specified period, which applies to those from both inside and outside SA. They provide specific topical expertise, handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial guidelines and has a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines are now fully aligned with those of the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 80%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

This is a young journal with a continental scope and focus, and has made an excellent start. Most of the research is based in hospital settings, although it focuses on ambulatory patients and their problems. The quality is variable, with some articles merely a review of current knowledge and others representing original research and outcomes. Articles of the latter type are generally good, but mainly descriptive. Limited attention is given to the implications of the findings and recommendations for further research, policy or practice.

More attention could be given to the quality of the methods section of articles. For instance, a review article should follow the systematic review structure more closely, results should not appear in the discussion section of the article, and descriptions of the design, data collection instruments and data collection process should be more comprehensive. The reader is often left with too many questions.

Publication is based on a rolling, online publishing model, so there is no set number of articles per annum, but they seem to average around 30. The journal will almost certainly appeal to junior researchers setting out to publish. As an open-access online journal, there are page charges but these are reasonable and likely to be affordable to registrars and junior staff, with the added bonus of relatively quick publication once accepted.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

In terms of useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc., it is difficult to have these features in a rolling online publication. However, all published articles have proper English abstracts (also in French) and presentation is of a high standard. The policy on the publication of *errata* is not clear, but no *errata* were observed in the journal. The citation practice is appropriate.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

The journal is still new, therefore it is difficult to judge its comparability with international journals, but it shows promise. A good start for a young journal with a continental scope is evident. It is perhaps not the best work in the country but is certainly of a fairly high standard and is comparable to many international generalist journals. The journal focuses on topical African issues with an appropriate clinical spectrum. It is very useful to have a journal that focuses on the primary health care component of African health services, since this is the component that differs enormously from that in other regions of the world. The journal can definitely be used by most health professionals and as such become an important arena for discussion.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The editor should enrich the journal with editorial content, book reviews, etc. Greatly increase the supply of articles published, particularly from the rest of Africa (it is an African journal). Involve other health professionals in the editorial board and recruit authors from among nurses, medical assistants and others. Carefully review articles for adequacy of methods description. Advertise the journal and seriously consider publishing more issues per year as this would allow the addition of regular editorials, current opinions, letters to the editor, etc. without reducing the number of articles published. Encourage authors to conduct and submit interventional studies.

### **Business aspects**

This is an online journal with hard copies available to subscribers on order. The publisher, AOSIS Open-Journals, takes full responsibility for production and distribution. The journal only carries unpaid advertising via the conferences to which the journal is marketed. The journal receives financial sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 10, of whom only one is an organisation. The journal appears online (open access) and is part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism. The journal's (average) total income and total expenditure per annum is not available. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The author retains copyright, published under a Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY).

The journal is not indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS or IBSS. Articles are usually in English, although French articles are also considered. The journal has been independently peer-reviewed for DHET and Elsevier Scopus inclusion which were both successful. The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DoHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

### III. In addition, the Panel believes that the journal is a valuable addition to the health journals of South Africa.

#### 4.3 Infection Medicine

##### 4.3.1 *African Journal of AIDS Research*

**Focus and Scope:** The *African Journal of AIDS Research (AJAR)* is a peer-reviewed research journal publishing papers that make an original contribution to the understanding of social dimensions of HIV/AIDS in African contexts. The *AJAR* includes articles from, among others, the disciplines of sociology, demography, epidemiology, social geography, economics, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, health communication, media, cultural studies, public health, education, nursing science and social work. Papers relating to the impact, care, prevention and social planning, as well as articles covering social theory and the history and politics, of HIV/AIDS, are considered for publication.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** This is a relatively new journal that in reality is a social science journal, which is reflected in its editorial board. The editor and editorial board members are highly recognised and comprise a balance of international and local scientists. Given the title of the journal, one would expect more African scientists to be represented on the board.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for eight years, without significant interruptions in publication – all planned issues were published. The number of articles published during the period under review comprises 121 original research papers and three editorial prefaces; there were no book reviews. In the period 2007 - 2009, 465 original research article manuscripts were received. In total, 123 manuscripts were rejected at editorial review. About 69% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually the journal initially requires two completed peer reviews for each paper; a third is required if there are conflicting reviews. Often, as many as five to 10 reviewers are approached before two completed reviews are received. In 2009, 112 different peer reviewers were used, of whom 73% had non-South African addresses. All correspondence and all reviews are retained and categorised and accessible in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is five months, and on the web 4.5 months. Publication frequency of the journal is four issues per year. Issues of the journal are pre-scheduled to appear on given dates by agreement with the publisher. The issues do not always appear on the scheduled dates; in 2009, there were some delays of up to a month.

A single editor who had been editing the journal for 11 years was replaced by an editor-in chief and three associate editors. The editor was not appointed competitively; he was the founder of the journal. The appointment period was not stipulated; but the journal is currently looking for a new editor-in-chief. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively and their appointment period is not specified, although in 2010 the journal reviewed its editorial board and appointed a new board for a period of four years. The board members usually do not handle peer review of individual manuscripts, although the members are occasionally recruited, as are other reviewers, given their expertise in a particular area. On occasion, editorial board members are requested to provide opinions or to do editorial reviews.

Board members occasionally provide specific topical expertise, although editorial policy has not change markedly, and lately there has not been much need for advice. Board members are appointed from both inside and outside the country; 39% are South African; 39% from other African countries; and 20% from Europe and North America. They are specifically chosen to represent a range of health and social science expertise.

The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines, which have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal has a published ethics policy to which all authors must adhere. The policy explicitly addresses originality, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality, and protection of human subjects and animals in research.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as occasional editorials, but not generally so; it does not publish book reviews – this was tried but was found to be a very time-consuming exercise, and it was deemed that the value thus

added was not worth the effort. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 98%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of the articles is high; authors are primarily junior scientists with an occasional well-recognised scientist. A diverse and impressive range of articles are published from across Africa. Although a relatively new journal, it is very promising and has considerable potential to grow into a second-tier journal in the near future. The articles provide important insights on a range of social and programmatic challenges relating to HIV/AIDS. A substantial number of authors are drawn from SA institutions, but there is a heavy representation of African and other authors. This is indeed an excellent example of a locally published journal of inclusive continental significance. Four issues are published per annum, each issue having about 15 articles. One might expect a larger number of papers in this potentially vast field, from and about a continent with huge health problems and numerous socio-economic challenges and unresolved issues.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** This is a professionally presented journal with high-quality layout and good online access. Scholarly features beyond editorials, such as opinion pieces, correspondence and topical reviews, could certainly enhance the impact of this journal. All articles have an appropriate abstract in English. No *errata* were noted. Consistent and appropriate editorial practice is evident throughout. The layout is good and appealing to the reader. No typographical mistakes were detected in the sample.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal provides a good opportunity for social science students and junior scientists to publish their research with high-quality peer-review support. The quality of the publication is on a par with other second/third-tier social science research journals.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** Inclusion of opinions and reviews on topical issues by internationally acclaimed scientists could enhance the quality of this journal and its international standing. In addition, the inclusion of value-adding features might be considered, as book reviews and correspondence can add to its scholarly and practical impact.

**Business aspects**

The journal is published by National Inquiry Services Centre (NISC) (Pty) Ltd. From 2009, the journal has been co-published with Taylor and Francis who provide the primary access portal at [www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com). The publisher takes full responsibility for production and distribution. Full text is also hosted at Ingenta Connect and AJOL which offer free and/or subsidised full-text downloads to low and middle-income countries. The journal does not carry paid or unpaid advertising. The journal receives financial sponsorship from the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency (SIDA) and also from *ad hoc* sponsorship for the occasional special issue.

The following figures reflect the downloads of *African Journal of AIDS Research* on Ingenta Connect on a one-year basis: From July 2008 - June 2009, 23 135 viewed abstracts and 4 395 full-text downloads. Download figures on AJOL are not available per journal.

The journal is open-access once a year for a limited period of one month; all authors, reviewers and other correspondents are advised of this opportunity. Otherwise, free online download is available in low-income countries through AJOL, and subsidised download in middle-income countries. This is part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service, through Ingenta Connect.

On the editorial side, production costs were about R420 000 in 2009. The editor is not in a position to reflect the publisher's costs.

The journal has been approached by a major international journal publisher, but loyalty to its South African publisher led the editorial board not to consider this. Copyright is held by the publisher, NISC.



The journal is Thomson Reuters WoS-rated. The editor was waiting for the journal's first WoS factor. It is an English-medium-only journal. The journal has never been independently peer-reviewed before, and the editorial board welcomed this. In principle, the editor and the board would be interested for the journal to be considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, under policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.3.2 *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine*

**Focus and Scope:** The *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine (SAJHIVMED)* is a quarterly specialist medical journal. The purpose of the journal is to disseminate original research results and to support high-level learning related to HIV medicine. It publishes original research articles, editorials, clinical practice, correspondence, and other HIV-related medical articles.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor is a well-known local scientist who is internationally recognised. The editorial board members have high national and international disciplinary standing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 11 years, without significant interruptions in publication. The articles published during the period under review consist of 45 peer-reviewed original papers, 39 letter-type articles and 28 book reviews, but no critical literature reviews.

In the same period, 122 manuscripts were received. About 10 manuscripts were rejected without peer review. A little less than five per cent of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually 1 - 2 peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In one year, approximately 20 peer reviewers were used. None of these peer reviewers had non-South African addresses. The peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and on the web is 100 days. The publication frequency of the journal is four issues, but sometimes three, per annum.

The editor has been editing the journal for four years and was appointed by the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society for an unspecified period. The editorial board members are appointed by the editor for an unspecified period. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices. Board members are appointed from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines, while a conflict-of-interest policy is available. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews, and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is approximately 80%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of published articles is good. The articles are a varying mix of material: regular introductory editorials, a handful of research-based original articles or letters or case reports, frequent opinion pieces and debates, a few book reviews, consensus treatment guidelines, and conference reports. The peer-reviewed articles are scholarly and evidence-based. Much of the good work produced by this community is published overseas, but is well supported by the local specialists in this field. The work reported is representative of strong local activity in the field. It is useful and informative as a continuing medical education tool for clinicians and students/trainees.

### Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as comments/opinions on relevant topics, and is very up-to-date. The layout and presentation are very professional and attractive. Appropriate abstracts in English are published; no *errata* were noted.

### Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus Review:** In its current form with limited inclusion of empirical articles, it has a long way to go to reach international standards. It is nevertheless fulfilling a very important role and doing it very well. The journal is definitely suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** The journal is at a critical point in its development for serious consideration to be given to how it can elevate its local and international standing and attract more empirical contributions. It needs to attract more and stronger evidence-based, prospective research articles, from this and neighbouring countries.

The editor should ensure that the journal is published as scheduled and seriously consider covering some basic science since there are some very 'strong' laboratories in South Africa conducting HIV research.

The Panel believes that the journal could potentially become the leading international developing country HIV journal by covering work done in India, South America and the rest of Africa.

### Business aspects

The regular print run of the journal is 13 323 copies per issue. It is published by HMPG. Both the production and distribution services are outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising. The journal receives financial sponsorship.

The journal has 3 000 paying subscribers, of whom 45 are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal appears free online, open access, and also as part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal uses Creative Commons Attribution (free non-commercial) for copyright arrangements.

In principle the editor would be interested for the journal to be considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free online, open-access journal.

### Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

### 4.3.3 Southern African Journal of Epidemiology and Infection

**Focus and Scope:** The *Southern African Journal of Epidemiology and Infection (SAJEI)* first appeared in 1985 as a joint publication of the Infectious Diseases Society of Southern Africa (IDSSA), the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Society of Southern Africa (STDSSA) and the Epidemiology Society of Southern Africa, the latter having subsequently been succeeded by the Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA). *SAJEI* is published under the auspices of the Federation of Infectious Diseases Societies of South Africa which is an umbrella organisation incorporating IDSSA, STDSSA, the Infection Control Society of South Africa (ICASA), the South African Society for Clinical Microbiology (SASCM), the South African Society of Travel Medicine (SASTM) and the Southern African Society of Paediatric Infectious Diseases (SASPID), together with PHASA.

### Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** This is a well-established (dating back to 1985) and locally well-recognised public health/infectious diseases journal. The editor is well known and has a good reputation. The associate

editors are all at South African institutions, and represent a good cross-section of the most senior and well-known people in the infectious disease field in the country. The editorial board comprises well-established international and South African researchers.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 26 years, without significant interruptions in publication. All planned issues were published. The number of articles published during the period under review comprised 39 original research papers, 12 reviews and three letter-types (non-peer-reviewed). In the same period, a total of 40 original research and 12 review manuscripts were received. None of the received manuscripts was rejected without peer review. Of the total published papers, three original research and eight reviews had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually the journal requires two peer reviewers for each submitted manuscript. In 2007, 14 different peer reviewers were used; none of these had non-South African addresses. The peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is eight months. The publication frequency of the journal is quarterly (four issues per year). Issues of the journal appear on given dates as pre-scheduled.

The editor has been editing the journal for seven years. The editor was not appointed competitively, and the appointment period is indefinite. Editorial board members are also not appointed competitively and their appointment period is not specified. They do not usually handle peer review of individual manuscripts, although they advise on editorial policies/practices. Board members are from within the country, to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines, and it has a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 90%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The articles are well written and are of high quality. About half the articles (8 - 10 empirical papers per issue) are original research with an occasional case study or treatment guideline. Some issues of the journal include original research from authors who are ranked among the world's foremost researchers. An impression is gained that there is steady improvement in the overall quality of the content of the journal. The journal has authoritative invited editorials, and features guidelines for diagnosis and/or treatment reviews, but no book reviews or correspondence.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is professionally presented and provides updates on new and revised guidelines. No *errata* were noted. The journal incorporates much material suitable for both undergraduate and postgraduate use, as well as by professionals.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** This journal is on a par with many of the second-tier journals. It publishes substantial original research of high quality. It is suitable for students and junior staff and professionals entering the discipline.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** There is a gap in South Africa in terms of availability of surveillance data on notifiable conditions, given the demise of *Epidemiological Comments* (formerly published by the Department of Health), that this journal could potentially address.

The expansion of participation of scholars from other (Southern) African countries, from authors of articles to editorial associates, would be beneficial, especially in view of the geographic aspect of the title of the journal.

A careful look is warranted at whether this journal can really adequately represent activity in epidemiology, in fields beyond infectious diseases.

The journal should make use of reviewers from outside the country.

### **Business aspects**

The journal's regular print run is 2 200 copies per issue; it is published by Medpharm Publications (Pty) Ltd who also produce the journal. It carries paid advertising. All expenses are covered by advertising, with no other subsidies or membership fees contributing to the business unit. Intellectual property (IP) is licensed to the publisher.

The journal has three paying subscribers. About 2 148 individuals receive the journal as a society membership benefit. The journal appears online, as a free online, open-access publication. It is also part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism.

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. All articles are submitted and published in English. The journal has never been independently peer-reviewed previously, and the editorial board welcomes this. In principle, the editor and the board would be interested for the journal to be considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free online, open-access journal, if this provides an accessible additional index. The journal is already hosted and managed on an open-access database.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. **The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

## **4.4 Sports Medicine**

### **4.4.1 International SportMed Journal**

**Focus and Scope:** The *International SportMed Journal (ISMJ)* is the official international, peer-reviewed, sports medicine journal of the International Federation of Sports Medicine (FIMS). The content of this journal is of primary interest to professionals in the fields of sports medicine and exercise science, as well as those in related health fields.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor-in-chief and members of the editorial board are respected scientists, researchers and/or clinicians in their respective fields and have a high national and international standing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 10 years, with no interruptions. The publication frequency of the journal is quarterly (four times per annum). Issues are pre-scheduled to appear on 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December. There have been no serious interruptions in publication but only occasional delay in the date of publication. The total number of manuscripts received in the same period was 73. One manuscript was rejected without peer review. About 75% of published articles have a South African author.

Three reviewers are usually approached for each submitted manuscript, and about 50 peer reviewers were used in 2008, of whom 80% had a non-South African address. Peer review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The journal is solely online; the average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication on the web is 28 - 90 days.

The editor has been editing the journal for 10 years and was appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process for a period of four years (subject to re-appointment).

Members of the editorial board handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies and practices. They are appointed competitively via a selection process for four years (renewable), are internationally based and have specific topical expertise.

Editorial guidelines are published, and the conflict-of-interest policy is included. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines are not aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The published articles are of good quality but the number of articles published per annum is relatively low. The published articles are representative of some of the best work done in the country in the journal's field, although quality could nevertheless be better considering that it is an international publication. Local and international authors are published in the journal.

The journal shapes well with some of the comparable international journals in attracting the best work from international authors. The *ISMJ* publishes research that addresses regional problems from regions all over the world, and it succeeds well in blending the work of scientists from different cultural and scientific backgrounds.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal publishes useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc. Proper English abstracts for all articles are also published. *Errata* are published when necessary, and citation practice is good. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are good.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/junior staff in the discipline concerned. The *ISMJ* is an international journal with a large South African readership because of its affiliation with the South African Sports Medicine Association. It offers the South African graduate and junior scientist an international cross-section of scientific work, and certainly provides stimuli for scientific thinking. In relation to other journals with the same/similar themes, it is highly comparable.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The inclusion of regular editorials and more position statements and best practice guidelines would be useful.

**Business aspects**

The publisher is the *Fédération Internationale de Médecine du Sport (FIMS)*, i.e. the International Federation of Sports Medicine. The journal is published only online via a commercial pay-to-view and pay-to-subscribe e-publication service. The production and distribution services are outsourced. The journal does not carry any advertisements nor receive any sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 12 000, of whom 100 are organisational subscribers. The total annual average income is US\$24 000, and the total annual expenditure is US\$27 960. Each author submitting a manuscript for publication signs copyright transfer to FIMS. The journal is indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS. The journal has never been independently peer-reviewed. The editor feels that listing the journal on ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa platform would have to be determined by the organisation that owns the journal, i.e. the FIMS.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed under DHET policy as a WoS-indexed periodical.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.4.2 *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation* is published by the University of Stellenbosch. This refereed research journal is DHET accredited and ap-

pears twice annually. Contributions from the fields of sport science, movement education, recreation/leisure studies, exercise science and dance studies are considered for publication.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor and editorial board members are of high national and international disciplinary reputation and standing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 31 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period 2006 - 2008, the number of published peer-reviewed original papers was 72. In the same period, about 120 manuscripts were received. Normally, all manuscripts go through peer review but there are a few exceptions where some are rejected without peer review. Approximately 8% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually one subject editor and two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In the same period, 69 peer reviewers were used. The editor has details of how many of these had non-South African addresses. The editor keeps peer-review reports. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and on the web is 7.8 months. The journal issues are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for 11 years, but was not appointed competitively. No time span was set for the appointment period. Editorial board members are also not appointed competitively, and no period set for their tenure. They are appointed from inside and outside the country, to provide specific topical expertise. Editorial board members handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and occasionally advise on editorial policies and practices.

Editorial policy guidelines are published, but there is no conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial/policy guidelines have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. *Errata* are published when necessary. The journal does not contain scholarly value-adding features. Between 12 and 16 articles appear per issue, with an average of 28 per annum.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of the published articles is of a moderate to high standard. They are a very representative sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline. A good focus falls on local/regional topics. The journal is published twice a year, with 12 - 16 articles per issue, which is a good number per annum. Authors are from across the country, and are also well represented internationally.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Very few useful additional scholarly features are included. All published articles have proper English abstracts. No publication of *errata* was noticed. Citation practice is good. Good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are maintained.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and young staff in the discipline. It bears some comparability with leading international journals in the field.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** Consideration should be given to including book reviews, editorials and congress events.

**Business aspects**

The journal's print run is 125 copies per issue, and it is published by Stellenbosch University. Production and distribution are handled in-house. The journal carries no paid or unpaid advertising. No financial sponsorship is received.

The number of paying subscribers is 90, of whom 24 are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal appears online as part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service, as well as part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism.

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal has a standard copyright arrangement, and is indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS; the editor assumes that Thomson Reuters WoS-type impact factors have been determined for it. The journal publishes front details such as titles, authors, addresses and English abstracts. The editor and publisher are not interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa open-access platform.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals, over and above its entitlement to this, in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.4.3 *South African Journal of Sports Medicine*

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Journal of Sports Medicine (SAJSM)* is a quarterly journal that publishes research articles, reviews, commentaries, letters and case studies on topics related to the disciplines represented by the South African Sports Medicine Association.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor-in-chief is a recognised scholar and researcher of high international standing in academic sport science. He has an extensive personal publishing record. The editorial board is a good blend of international scholars and leading South African academics in sport and exercise sciences with high national and international disciplinary reputations and standing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 28 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 47 peer-reviewed original papers, two letter-type articles and nine reviews. In the same period, 97 manuscripts were received. Five manuscripts were rejected without peer review. About 1% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript, and about 20 reviewers were used in total each year. None of these reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is four months for print and online. The publication frequency of the journal is four issues per year. The issues of the journal are not pre-scheduled to regularly appear on scheduled dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for nine years and was appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. The editor's appointment period is undetermined. The current board members have been appointed for two years from both within and outside the country. They provide specific topical expertise, handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and sometimes advise on editorial policies/practices. The journal publishes editorial guidelines and a conflict-of-interest policy. The editor was not aware of the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal publishes *errata* should they become apparent. The journal contains editorials as a scholarly value-adding feature. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is approximately 30%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The *SAJSM* publishes a blend of work of good international standing and local South African content. The quality of South African content seems to be dependent on the number and quality of the submissions made to the journal. Even though a rigorous peer-review process is followed, the *SAJSM* is seemingly obliged to provide a platform for publication for junior South African researchers and may have to compromise on quality from time to time, in order to present content that is relevant and unique to South Africa. The best work by South African authors is probably reflected in this particular journal. Review articles are also of a high standard. In the preceding three years, there were 47 peer-reviewed articles, two letter-type articles and nine review articles; these all originated from 97 articles submitted. The number of articles published per annum is acceptable.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The *SAJSM* publishes regular editorials of a high standard, reflecting on sports and exercise medicine (SEM) and sport science issues relevant to South Africa, and also provides a mirror to place South African SEM in context with the international literature. Additional scholarly features include position statements of the South African Sports Medicine Association that are published periodically, and the editor highlights an article as the 'editor's choice'; there are also commentary articles and case studies. Reviews are of a scientific nature and not taken from textbooks. No letters or book reviews appeared in the issues reviewed, but these have been published at other times. There are proper English-language abstracts. *Errata* are suitably published. Good citation practice is followed.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is a good general stimulus for local graduate students in the discipline concerned. The journal bears comparison with leading international journals in the field, and it compares favourably with other international journals. The general layout of the *SAJSM* is of a high standard. Articles are well laid out, with excellent presentation of tables and figures.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** Wider representation of disciplines on the editorial board is needed, which could be achieved by attracting more internationally recognised authors and articles.

The Panel believes that the journal could provide an opportunity to publish developments and news from SEM units in South Africa, as well as from South African sport federations and associated scientific bodies, such as the South African Sports Medicine Association, the Biokinetics Association of South Africa, the Association of Dietetics of South Africa and the South African Society of Physiotherapy.

### **Business aspects**

The regular print run of the journal is approximately 450. It is published by the Health and Medical Publishing Group (HMPG), a division of the South African Medical Association. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries paid advertising, and does not receive any financial sponsorship.

The number of paying subscribers is 350; all are individual members. The journal appears free online. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Creative Commons is used for copyright arrangements.

The journal is not indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS or ProQuest BSS. Articles are usually in English. The journal has been previously independently peer-reviewed. The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAF's SciELO-South Africa as a free online, open-access journal.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

### **4.4.3 African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance (AJPHERD)**

**Focus and Scope:** The *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance (AJPHERD)* is a peer-reviewed journal established to provide a forum for physical educators, health educators, specialists in human movement studies and dance, as well as other sport-related professionals in Africa, to report their research findings based on African settings and experiences, and also to exchange ideas among themselves. It affords the professionals and other interested individuals in these disciplines the opportunity to learn more about the practice of the disciplines on different parts of the continent and create an awareness in the rest of the world about the professional practice of the disciplines in Africa.

### **Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor and members of the editorial board have high national and international disciplinary reputations. The editorial board membership increased from 10 to 23 to reflect geographical spread and subject areas. Of the initial 10 members of the editorial board, six were from South African institutions, three were from other countries in Africa, and one was from China. Presently, of the



23 editorial board members, eight are from various institutions in South Africa, eight are from different regions and institutions in Africa, and one each from Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada, the USA, Trinidad and Tobago, and China. The advisory board comprises four individuals from the UK, Germany and the USA who provide technical advice on the disciplines covered by the journal.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 19 years, without interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 149 peer-reviewed original papers and two book reviews. Approximately 250 manuscripts were received in the same period. Of these manuscripts, 27 were rejected after peer review and nine without peer review. Less than 5% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. For submitted articles, about 65 peer reviewers were used in total per year. Approximately 5% of these peer reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is six months, while online appearance is usually immediately after publication. The publication frequency of the journal is four times (quarterly) a year. Issues of the journal are pre-scheduled to appear regularly on the scheduled dates. Supplements are published occasionally on various themes on the disciplines covered by the journal.

The editor has been editing the journal for 19 years. Members of the editorial board are appointed competitively, following a selection process. They are appointed from inside and outside the country for a given period, and provide specific topical expertise (subject specialists). Editorial board members do not directly handle peer review of individual manuscripts, except in a few cases where their expert knowledge is required; however, they do advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial guidelines but has no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains only editorials as a scholarly value-adding feature. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 90%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of accepted articles is medium to good. The level is national and not international. A substantial number of articles are published per annum, comprising a very good sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline. The journal has a good focus on local and regional types of material. Authors from across the country, and internationally, are well represented. There are about 10 - 12 peer-reviewed articles in each of the quarterly issues, giving around 48 articles per annum. One might expect a larger number of papers in this potentially vast field, particularly in an African context. The journal is 'of Africa', but a large proportion of the articles have been written by authors associated with South African institutions. Information about the journal is, however, made available through the regional structures of the continent, via the African Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance (AFAPHER-SD).

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, and scholarly correspondence. Very high-level abstracts for all articles are published. *Errata* are published when they become apparent. The citation practice is good. Presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are all good.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline. It is questionable whether it is comparable with some leading international journals in the field.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** Wider representation of disciplines on the editorial board, and options for lower cost to authors, could well be considered.

This journal has an inappropriate title and a scope of topics that is too broad and ill-defined. The journal should decide on its focus and stick to it and possibly reconsider its title. A scientific journal should have a clear focus and publish articles within this focus, and not any other topics. Publishing anything that is submitted does not develop the scientific field of focus, misrepresents the journal and does not promote targeted access by interested readers. There should also be a concerted effort to improve the scientific value of the articles. The articles are short and 'light' in scientific penetration.

The editors need to attract more of the work that is being done in the leading centres of the country and the continent in the different sub-fields.

### Business aspects

The average total number of pages per issue is 132. The journal is published by LAM/AFAHPER-SD. Both the journal's production and distribution are outsourced. The journal does not carry paid advertising but does carry unpaid advertising. No financial sponsorship is received by the journal.

The number of paying subscribers varies each year, but it is worldwide. The subscribers vary yearly, but there are more organisations/institutions than individuals. The journal appears online, as part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service.

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal's copyright arrangements involve transferring copyright from authors to publishers.

The journal is not yet indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS but it is in the process of applying for inclusion. Articles are usually in English. The journal has been independently peer-reviewed previously.

The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free online, open-access journal, only if there are funds for publishing. They will be delighted to have a sponsor.

### Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

## 4.5 Surgery/Gynaecology/Obstetrics/Radiology

### 4.5.1 South African Journal of Surgery (SAJS)

**Focus and Scope:** The *SAJS* is a quarterly general surgical journal. It carries research articles and letters, editorials, clinical practice and other surgical articles, personal opinion, South African health-related news, obituaries, general correspondence, and classified advertisements.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editorial board comprises senior South African academics. There do not appear to be any international/non-South African members on the editorial board. The editor and editorial board members are of high national standing and some are internationally respected in their fields. They represent a good cross-section of the most notable academic individuals in the general surgical field working in this country.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 47 years, without significant interruptions in publication. During the period under review, 61 peer-reviewed original papers, five letter-type articles (including editorials), and nine book reviews were published. It is difficult for the editor to provide accurate figures for the number of received manuscripts in the same period because of the recent migration to an online system.

Of 180 papers submitted, 36 (20%) were accepted for publication. A little under 5% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually 1 - 3 peer reviewers are approached

for each submitted manuscript. In the same period, approximately 40 peer reviewers were used. Less than 5% of peer reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and on the web is 150 days. The publication frequency of the journal is four issues per annum. The journal issues appear regularly on pre-scheduled dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for nine years, but was not appointed competitively; the appointment was via the Association of Surgeons of South Africa (ASSA). No fixed period was set for the appointment. The editorial board members are also not appointed competitively, and no period is set for their tenure. They are appointed from inside and outside the country, to provide specific topical expertise. Editorial board members handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and give advice on editorial policies and practices.

The editorial policy guidelines are published, and there is a conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial/policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. *Errata* are published when these have become apparent. The journal contains scholarly value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material exceeds 80%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** Published articles are of moderate to good quality. A substantial number of articles are published per annum. The published work does not represent a sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline. The journal focuses on a local and regional range of subject matter. Much good surgical research is published overseas, but it seems that the local community of academic surgeons supports this journal strongly.

The majority of articles are of South African origin. There are eight to 10 peer-reviewed items per issue, perhaps yielding about 50 articles per annum.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, book reviews, and letters to the editor. The journal publishes proper abstracts for all articles. Publication of *errata* was not seen in the copies reviewed. Good citation practice, and good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are maintained.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal provides a good opportunity for local graduate students to have their research work published. The journal includes good review articles; it compares well with international journals.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** This is a most valuable journal for the South African surgical community but could better serve the broader surgical community, and not just principally the general surgical community.

The editor should seriously consider a more regular flow of contributions from sub-specialty surgeons, most of whose publications do not have a local outlet, to become a very powerful medium for surgical progress in South Africa and the region.

**Business aspects**

The journal's print run is 1 000 copies per issue; it is published by HMPG. Both production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising; however, no financial sponsorship is received. All recipients of the journal are paying subscribers, of whom 38 are organisations as opposed to individuals.

The journal appears online free (open access) and is also part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal uses the Creative Commons Attribution (free non-commercial) for copyright arrangements.

The journal is indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS. It has never been independently peer-reviewed previously. The editor and publisher would in principle be interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa open-access platform.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.5.2 SA Bone and Joint Surgery – discontinued

#### 4.5.3 Southern African Journal of Anaesthesia and Analgesia (SAJAA)

**Focus and Scope:** The journal's primary aim is the publication of research, case studies and review papers in the field of anaesthesia and analgesia, aimed at the specialist anaesthetist. All material is sent for peer review. The SAJAA is the official mouthpiece of the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA).

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editors have a high national standing within the profession, which also applies to the editorial board which is composed of senior members of the discipline in this country.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 14 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 31 peer-reviewed original articles, 11 letter-type articles and 31 reviews. It is difficult to provide accurate figures for received manuscripts in the same period, but 40 manuscripts were received in 2008, of which none were rejected without peer review. In total, 33 published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually, two to three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript.

In 2008, a total of 18 peer reviewers were used, none of whom had a non-South African address. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is seven months. The journal publishes six issues per annum, which appear regularly on pre-scheduled dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for approximately eight years. The editor was not appointed competitively and the appointment period is determined by SASA. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively, but their appointment period is specified. They are appointed from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise (section editors according to specific areas of interest). They screen manuscripts and select reviewers and also advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial policy guidelines and it has a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is about 70%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of articles ranges from average to good. An adequate number of articles are published per annum. Published research indicates that it is a good sample of the best work done in the country in the field. The focus of articles is on local and regional topics. Local authors range from all over SA, mainly from the academic hospitals. A good proportion of papers originate from outside the country. The focus of the editorials and reviews is very clearly related to subjects of interest to SA anaesthetists. The research articles are mainly clinical and have relevance for practitioners in developing countries.

### Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains additional scholarly features such as good reviews and the occasional correspondence. Further, there is an editorial in each issue which is relevant and topical. Abstracts are adequate. No *errata* were noted but the editorial policy provides for these. Citation practice is variable. Not all articles are adequately referenced. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are all good.

### Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus Review:** The journal is comparable with leading international journals in the field, though on a smaller scale. It appears to be highly orientated towards communication with junior staff. In relation to other SA journals for clinical disciplines, this journal appears to be among the top contenders. It is clear that the research being published in the journal is not as cutting-edge as that found in top international journals; however, it caters well for its readership, the SA anaesthetist.

### Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** It is clear that the journal is developing a niche for international authors, but this might have been related to the recent international conference held in SA.

Visibility to overseas readers is probably lacking as it is not abstracted by any major service.

It caters for registrars and should be encouraged to continue.

More original articles, systematic reviews, good short reports, and research letters are required.

Consideration should be given to increasing the number of original articles and national and international reviewers. The editor should seriously consider increasing the international profile of the journal.

### Business aspects

The regular print run of the journal is 1 200 copies per issue; it is published by Medpharm Publications (Pty) Ltd. Both production and distribution are done in-house by Medpharm. The journal carries paid advertising but not unpaid advertising. All expenses are covered by advertising; there are no other subsidies or membership fee contributions to the business unit. IP is licensed to the publisher.

The journal has paying subscribers of whom most are organisations. The journal appears free online (open access), and also online as part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism.

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. If articles are not in English, front details such as titles, authors, addresses and English abstracts are published. The editor would be interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa platform, if the platform provides an accessible additional index. The journal is already hosted and managed on an open-access database.

### Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.5.4 South African Orthopaedic Journal

**Focus and Scope:** The journal comes out quarterly, and serves as an immediate publication for non-commercial academic articles that are peer-reviewed.

### Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editorial board comprises heads of academic departments in South Africa who have high national standing and reputation in the discipline. The editor-in-chief takes his task very seriously as is evident from the care he takes in making sure of the journal's relevance and reputation.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 13 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review the journal published 84 - 90 peer-reviewed original papers, 36 case

reports, 12 book reviews and three very high-quality articles on basic research. In the same period, only a small number (10) of manuscripts were turned down, owing to the high quality of the manuscripts. None of the submitted manuscripts was rejected without peer review. Few published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In 2008, about 58 reviewers were used, of whom only a few had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is two months; however, the journal is not published online. The publication frequency of the journal is four issues per annum. Issues are scheduled for specific dates.

The current editor-in-chief has held the position for a year (since 2013) and was appointed for a five-year term by the exco of the South African Orthopaedic Association. The previous editor was not appointed competitively. He had been appointed for eight years by the South African Orthopaedic Association; his appointment was further extended in February 2010 for another three years.

Heads of department who qualify for membership of the editorial board were appointed from February 2010 for three years. Editorial board members are appointed only from inside the country; they cover a wide spectrum of orthopaedics in their daily work, apart from their own specific expertise. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies and practices.

The journal has editorial policy guidelines, and a conflict-of-interest policy. The policy guidelines are semi-aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. If important, the editor publishes *errata* where these have become apparent. The journal contains scholarly value-adding features such as editorials, as well as correspondence on published articles always in the form of expert opinion on articles, which appear in every issue, but seldom book reviews. The message from the president of the SA Orthopaedic Association covers a wide range of topics and appears in every issue. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is about 85%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** A good number of articles are published per annum. It is likely that the best work is published in PubMed-listed journals. Articles are published by mostly South African authors. The articles are a varying mix of clinical reviews, continuing medical education, original research articles, well-contextualised reports of successful clinical approaches to particular problems, retrospective clinical case reviews, and a large number of clinical articles that are usually case reports and associated reviews of the literature. The original research-based papers are of middling quality, not many appearing to reach beyond convention towards innovations or the exploitation of the massive growth of knowledge about inflammation, bone physiology/pathophysiology, cancer, or even pharmacology. The journal, however, is an important repository of academic and reflective professional work done in the discipline in this country, and it draws contributions from across the quite extensive discipline.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Editorials, and reviews of other published articles by South African experts, appear. No correspondence/letters to the editor were noted in the copies reviewed. Proper abstracts for all articles are published. Suitable publication of *errata* was not seen in the copies reviewed. Citation practice is good. Good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions prevail.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline. It is comparable with some international journals in the field. The journal compares reasonably well with international exemplars, but is underpowered in terms of high-level science and internationally significant scholarship.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** In its current format, i.e. Message from the President, not PubMed-listed, and with its current distribution methodology, it is unlikely to advance from a local journal and attract the best local or international research.

A panel of international advisers may be helpful in taking the journal into a broader view of its possibilities and more excitement and inspiration. There simply must be a greater sense of how orthopaedics is keeping pace with the overall growth of scientific knowledge. The inclusion of more value-adding features in the content might also be considered, especially book reviews and correspondence, which could add to its scholarly and practical impact.

The original research should be labelled as such and should be increased. The editor should seriously reconsider the 'academic-looking' advertorials which should not be encouraged in a scholarly journal. The Panel believes that the journal should attempt to attract high-quality local and international research in the field.

#### **Business aspects**

The journal's print run is approximately 2 000 copies per issue. It is published by Champagne Media. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries advertisements paid for by the trade, but does not carry unpaid advertising. It receives only trade financial sponsorship.

The trade carries the subscription cost; therefore, the journal does not have direct subscribers. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Copyright is managed by the South African Orthopaedic Association. The journal has been independently peer-reviewed previously. The journal is not indexed in either Thomson Reuters WoS or ProQuest IBSS. Although still mainly print-based, the journal is available free online on the SciELO platform, which is open access.

This journal is distributed free of charge to 196 orthopaedic surgeons in Africa and in under-developed countries. Since January 2009, the number of published articles has been increased, without lowering of standards. Guidelines for peer reviewing appear in every issue, and author guidelines are published.

#### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. Its listing on the SciELO-South Africa platform should continue.

#### **4.5.5 South African Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology**

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* is published by HMPG. The journal provides a vehicle for the publication of news, editorials and original research in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology, with particular emphasis on South African conditions.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editorial board is constituted of senior members of the obstetrics and gynaecology community in South Africa. The editor-in-chief and members of the editorial board have high national disciplinary reputation and international standing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 16 years, without significant interruptions in publication (though issues were missed occasionally). In the period under review, the journal published 21 peer-reviewed original articles, 14 letter-type articles and four reviews. In the same period, 100 manuscripts were received. Approximately 40 manuscripts of all three types were rejected without peer review. About 5% of published papers of all three types had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually one to two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript.

About 10 peer reviewers were used in total, in any one of the three years under review. A little under 5% of them had non-South African addresses. At present, peer-review reports are not retained in the records but will be in future. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in both print and on the web is 180 days. The journal is published two to three times per annum, and the issues appear regularly on pre-scheduled dates.

The editor was appointed in October 2010 by HMPG. The appointed period is not specified. Editorial board members are selected by the editor for an unspecified period. They are appointed from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise. They also handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal contains editorial guidelines and a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion*

and Peer Review. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. Value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles appear. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 50%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The papers published are mostly of average merit, taking the scientific contribution in account. The three issues per annum usually each have a content of two to three scientific papers, with two to three case reports or scientific letters. This is limited and even meagre, given our country's population and eight medical faculties. The papers by no means reflect the best research done within the discipline in our country. One, at most, paper of research done in other countries was published per annum.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The issues followed a rather erratic pattern of including news items, society news and scholarly contributions by invited authors. The editorials were mostly mediocre.

All scientific papers included appropriate English abstracts. No *errata* appeared in the journals scrutinised. The citation practice is on a par with international journals. The presentation, layout and style are professionally done and of an international standard.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains abstracts of conferences and appropriate research and review articles for the stimulus of junior postgraduates and staff. However, the infrequency of publication and the relatively few articles limit its appeal. The overall impression is that the journal does not match up to leading international journals based on the number and scope of its articles, the lack of broadness of the authorships, and to a certain extent the quality of the articles. Increasing regional contributions should give the journal more international recognition.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The journal has the potential to become the most sought-after journal for publication of obstetrics and gynaecology research in the sub-continent, if not in sub-Saharan Africa. This will require consistency regarding the format including news items, society news and other scholarly contributions and expanding the average number of scientific papers per issue. The number of issues should be increased to a consistent quarterly journal. The pool of reviewers should be increased. The high rejection rate without peer review should be reviewed by the editorial board. The turnaround time is problematic in terms of publishing cutting-edge research and should be reviewed.

**Business aspects**

The regular print run of the journal is 4 876 per issue; it is published by HMPG. Both production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising. However, the journal does not receive financial sponsorship. All recipients of the journal are paying subscribers, of whom about 12 are organisations as opposed to individuals.

The journal appears free online (open access). It adheres to the Creative Commons Attribution (free non-commercial copyright). All articles are published in English. The editor would in principle be interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa platform.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.5.6 South African Journal of Radiology

**Focus and Scope:** At the time of this review, the *South African Journal of Radiology* was published by HMPG; it publishes papers related to radiology.



**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** Past and current editors have high national standing within the profession, having been either heads of department or representatives of the Radiological Society of South Africa (RSSA); the same applies to the editorial board.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 13 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 73 peer-reviewed original articles, 25 letter-type articles and seven reviews. It is difficult to provide accurate figures for received manuscripts in the same period because of the recent migration to an online system. Approximately 40% of manuscripts of all three types were rejected without peer review. A little less than 5% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually one to two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript.

About 20 peer reviewers were used in total, in any one of the three years under review. None of them had a non-South African address. Peer review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in both print and on the web is 150 days. The journal is published four times per annum. The journal issues appear regularly on pre-scheduled given dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for two years; she was appointed by the RSSA for an unspecified period. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively, and their appointment period is also unspecified. They are appointed from inside the country to provide specific topical expertise. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial policy guidelines and has a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with ASSAf's *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. Included are value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews (rarely) and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is about 70%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality appears to be average at best. The articles do not reflect the best of published research in this area. The number of cases and clinical reports is adequate, while the output of research studies is inadequate for a scientific journal, particularly relative to the size of the specialty. Articles have a local and regional focus.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** No book reviews are evident, but editorials, topical reviews and correspondence all feature. Abstracts are adequate. No *errata* were noted but the editorial policy provides for this. Citation practice is variable. Not all articles are adequately referenced. Good-quality images illustrate the text. Easy-to-read style and adequate editing with few grammatical or typographical errors prevail.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** More original research papers are needed. Currently the journal has much more emphasis on individual cases and less on scientific studies. The journal does not compete with international radiology journals in the scope or quality of its published articles. It is not suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students/junior staff in the discipline.

The journal provides a service for completing a questionnaire in each issue towards gaining CPD points.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** Attempts should be made to increase the number of issues per year to six. The journal should try to become the journal of choice for the publication of African radiology research. More original articles, systematic reviews, good short reports, and research letters are required.

There is a need to increase the number of peer reviewers and improve the quality and quantity of empirical research articles.

The Panel is very concerned about the limited research content of the journal. The editorial board should make every effort to increase the research content. Failure to do so is likely in future reviews to result in a recommendation not to support continued listing of the journal on the DHET list of accredited journals.

#### **Business aspects**

The regular print run of the journal is 1 000 copies per issue; it is published by HMPG. Both production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising. However, it does not receive financial sponsorship. The number of paying subscribers includes members of the RSSA (727); an overseas subscriber (one); and 75 local including other radiographers; of the latter, nine are institutions (including one library).

The journal appears free online (open access). It conforms to the Creative Commons Attribution (free non-commercial copyright). All articles are published in English. The editor would in principle be interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. Note should, however, be taken of the need to increase the research content of the journal as indicated under Suggested improvements.**
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

### **4.6 Psychology (Mental Health)**

#### **4.6.1 *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health***

**Focus and Scope:** The *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health* is published bi-annually by the South African Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions. It includes sections for reviews, original research, clinical perspectives, book reviews, and news and notices. It aims to publish work in the field of child and adolescent mental health from countries in Southern Africa and beyond.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal has an editor and four associate editors who are all leading academics and practitioners in psychology and psychiatry, and are of high national disciplinary reputation and standing. The advisory board of the journal comprises scholars with significant international reputation.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 21 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 14 original research articles, three letter-type articles, six book reviews and six clinical perspectives. In the same period, about 44 manuscripts were received, and only one was rejected without peer review. Approximately 21% of accepted papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. About 30 reviewers were used in one year, of whom 40% had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and on the web is one year in both cases. The publication frequency of the journal is twice a year. Issues of the journal are not pre-scheduled to appear on given dates.

The editor has been editing the journal since 1999, and was appointed competitively, following an advertisement and selection process (he was the only applicant). The appointment period is indefinite. Editorial board members are selected on the basis of what they can contribute. They are appointed for a given period from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise. Board members handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies and practices. The journal's editorial policy guidelines do not exist in text form, while a conflict-of-interest policy is not explicit, although the editorial team try to be consistent with best practice. The editorial/policy guidelines have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review* because they are not in written format. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains scholarly value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, and book reviews. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 71%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal publishes a broad scope of papers which are of a good to high standard, representing some of the best work in a specialised area of child and adolescent mental health. The journal focuses on local and regional mental health issues of children. Two issues are produced per annum, with a reasonable number of articles. A larger number of papers in this potentially vast field might be expected in a country with a large fraction of its total population in the relevant age category, and numerous socio-economic challenges and unresolved educational issues.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, and scholarly correspondence. All articles have abstracts. It is not clear whether *errata* are published. Citation practice is good, as are presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is a good source of information and data concerning children's mental health in South Africa, and is highly suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline concerned. The journal is not comparable with leading international journals in the field.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** More African and international contributions should be invited. It is most important that the journal's scope and size are increased, in terms of greater continental participation in both editing and authoring of articles, and in exploiting the double focus on child/adolescent psychology and its cognate 'neighbour', psychiatry, as well as the social dimensions related to health.

**Business aspects**

The journal is published by NISC (Pty) Ltd who handle the production and distribution. From 2009, the journal has been co-published with the Taylor and Francis Group who provide the primary access portal at [www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com). The publisher takes full responsibility for production and distribution. Full text is also hosted at Ingenta Connect and AJOL which offers free and/or subsidised full text downloads to low- and middle-income countries. The journal carries paid advertising on occasion but not unpaid advertising except for professional groups. The journal occasionally receives financial sponsorship.

The editor is not aware of subscription numbers. The journal appears online as part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service.

The journal has previously received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal follows standard procedures. All articles are in English. Consideration for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa open-access platform warrants discussion with the publishers and the association of which it is an organ, i.e. the South African Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (SAACAPAP) which is the professional body for child and adolescent mental health practitioners in South Africa. It was founded in 1978, and has since been an active member of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP). The journal has a published ethics policy addressing originality, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, privacy, confidentiality and protection of human and animal subjects. Submission of manuscripts is conditional upon adherence to this policy.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.6.2 African Journal of Psychiatry

**Focus and Scope:** The journal's primary aim is the publication of review and original articles, case reports and letters to the editor aimed at specialist mental health care and other professionals working in the neurosciences, as well as primary care practitioners.

### **Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor and editorial board are of high national and international disciplinary reputation and standing. They are representative of the SA research community and the editorial board comprises well-known members from Africa.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 12 years (initially *Journal of Depression and Anxiety*, then *South African Psychiatry Review*, and finally *African Journal of Psychiatry* – since August 2007), without significant interruptions in publication. All published content is peer-reviewed – about 50 - 60 manuscripts were reviewed in the period under review. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is 9 - 12 months. The publication frequency of the journal has been four per annum and, from 2011 onwards, six per annum. Journal issues are pre-scheduled and appear regularly on the scheduled dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for about eight years, but was not appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. The appointment period for the editor is not for a specific duration. Editorial board members are appointed from within SA to provide specific topical expertise. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices. The journal publishes editorial guidelines and has a conflict-of-interest policy. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains editorials as the only scholarly value-adding feature. The majority of pages in each issue represent peer-reviewed original material.

### **Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of articles is good to high. The content scope is topical and relevant, covering clinical policy and philosophical issues. It focuses on psychiatry issues in Africa. The journal largely represents work from Africa, and publishes an outstanding number of articles per annum. Published articles represent a good sample of the best work done in the country in the field. Articles focus on local and regional topics and issues. African representation is very prominent, and international contributions are also evident.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal publishes guest editorials, advertises lectures, reviews videos and books, and invites correspondence via its scientific letter forum. It also advertises current conferences in psychiatry and related professions. The journal follows the standard format of providing a background to the study, methodology, results and conclusion. All published articles have proper English abstracts. The publication practice for *errata* is not clear. Citation practice is good. Overall, the journal shows excellent presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is very suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline, and is comparable with leading international journals in the field.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** This is an outstanding publication, professionally produced, with high-quality content and good peer review.

It is a first-class mouthpiece for the African Association of Psychiatrists, and compares favourably with international journals. However, the journal should routinely include one or two articles from countries other than Africa.

Consideration should be given to broadening the journal's base and scope for both the editorial board and authors to other health professionals, to reflect the multidisciplinary aims of the journal.

The editor should seriously consider increasing the number of papers published from a broader psychiatric community.

**Business aspects**

The journal is published by In-house Publications. It carries paid advertising, but not unpaid advertising. No financial sponsorship is received by the journal. It appears online, on a free open-access platform. The journal is indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS. It has been independently peer-reviewed previously for inclusion in databases such as MEDLINE, etc. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal's copyright arrangements involve transferring of copyright from author to publisher. The journal is available online, free at [www.ajop.co.za](http://www.ajop.co.za).

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this, in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

**4.6.3 South African Journal of Communication Disorders (SAJCD)**

**Focus and Scope:** The *SAJCD* is an annual, peer-reviewed journal that publishes reports and papers dealing with research and critically evaluative theoretical, philosophical and conceptual issues concerning aspects of human communication and its disorders, dysphagia, service provision, training and policy.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The national disciplinary standing of the editor-in-chief and members of the editorial board is good, and reasonably high internationally, but all four are based at the University of Cape Town.

**Questionnaire:** The journal's first edition was published in 1948 (as *Journal of Logopaedics*). There has never been any significant interruption in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 21 peer-reviewed original articles and five letter-type articles. About 55 manuscripts were received in the same period. About three manuscripts of all three types were rejected without peer review.

Approximately 6/26 (23%) of papers published had at least one author with a non-South African address, and typically two authors. Three peer reviewers usually assess each submitted manuscript. About 50 peer reviewers were used in total in the same period, of whom 8/50 (16%) had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records, which have been made more accessible and easy to manage by means of the online system now in use.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print and on the web is approximately eight months. The journal is published annually, pre-scheduled to appear in December but not on a specific date. Issues appear regularly as scheduled.

The editor has been the editor-in-chief since 2009, after being on the editorial board since 2007. She was not appointed competitively, but the appointment is typically for a three-year period. Editorial board members are also not appointed competitively. Their appointment is typically for three years with the option to renew. Currently all board members are local. They provide specific topical expertise, also handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices. The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines. A conflict-of-interest policy has been developed. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is approximately 90 - 95%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The articles are generally of good quality. The content of the volumes reflects a good sample of the best work done in the country. Some articles in the *SAJCD* may represent some of the best work done in the field internationally; this is undoubtedly the most significant feature of the *SAJCD*. The authors are mainly staff members affiliated to academic institutions in the country. The number of articles per annum is not adequate with only one edition per year, and a limited number of research articles.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Editorials and topical reviews appear regularly in the *SAJCD* and are of great value in that national debate among scholars is thus stimulated. Book reviews appear in a quarterly newsletter. All published articles have proper English abstracts. Publication of *errata* was not observed. Citation practice is very good. Presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are generally good.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is highly suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline concerned. However, it is not comparable with leading international journals in the field.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The journal should try to obtain international scholars of high standing to review articles; this would be the surest way to lift the level of research proficiency of local academics, which is generally good, even further.

The publication should establish links with other similar journals so as to extend the editorial board, and establish an advisory board made up of local and international experts.

The number of works published should be consistent.

The number of articles per annum should be increased (two research articles per annum is not acceptable) and consideration be given to publishing the journal twice yearly.

### **Business aspects**

The normal print run of the journal is approximately 1 000 copies per issue; it is published by HMPG. Production and distribution are by HMPG. Advertisements are all paid for. The journal is funded by the South African Speech-Language-Hearing Association (SASLHA).

The journal has approximately 1 000 subscribers (members of SASLHA), of whom none/a very small number are organisations as opposed to individuals. Since 2010, the journal appears free online (open-access). The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.

A standard copyright agreement is used by HMPG. All articles are published in English. To the editor-in-chief's knowledge, the journal has never been independently peer-reviewed previously. The editor-in-chief is not interested in the journal being included in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa open-access platform.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

#### **4.6.4 South African Journal of Psychiatry**

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Journal of Psychiatry (SAJP)* is published by HMPG on behalf of the South African Society of Psychiatrists. The journal is a vehicle for the publication of news, editorials and original articles in the field of psychiatry, with emphasis on the conditions prevalent in South and southern Africa.

### **Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The disciplinary reputations and standing of the editor and members of the editorial board are of medium to high national and international status. The associate editorial board has 10 other African countries currently represented. The non-African members of the associate editorial board are international leaders in their fields of expertise.

**Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was not completed by the editor.

This journal is published four times a year, four articles per issue, and is Thomson Reuters WoS-listed.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** Articles cover a wide range of clinical and related areas of mental health among children, adolescents and adults. The journal publishes work from SA and other African countries. The quality of the accepted articles is quite variable. The highest quality research done in South African psychiatry is published in international journals, and many African psychiatrists do indeed also publish regularly in such journals. The number of issues and articles per annum is acceptable. Representivity of authors from all regions of the country and the continent is acceptable, with the majority of articles coming from South African authors, but a significant number from other African countries and occasional articles from the United States and Europe.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal includes editorials and letters to the editor as useful additional scholarly features. Articles are well structured. Abstracts follow international standards. There was no evidence of publication of *errata*. A recognised referencing system is applied.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is a good source of information and data concerning general psychiatry; it is comparable with the *Journal of African Psychiatry*. The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline. However, it is not comparable with leading international journals in the field.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** More articles from an international audience, as well as more from a number of African countries, should be invited. An advisory board of international members is suggested.

The editor should seriously consider inviting articles from younger clinicians and emerging researchers.

**Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was not completed by the editor.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

## 4.7 Nutrition/Dietetics/Endocrinology/Metabolism

### 4.7.1 South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition (SAJCN)

**Focus and Scope:** The *SAJCN* pursues a broad interpretation of the field of nutrition and recognises that there are many factors that determine nutritional status and that need to be the subject of scientific investigation and reported in the journal. It seeks to serve a broad readership and to provide information that will be useful to the scientific community, the academic community, government and non-government stakeholders in the nutritional field, policymakers and industry. The journal encourages articles from all investigators in dietetics, food, nutrition and related areas.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor and most editorial board members are recognised researchers nationally and internationally and have good publication records. This publication is the only South African nutrition journal. It has an excellent national reputation, but not an international one.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 22 years, without significant interruptions in publication. The number of articles published during the period under review comprises 45 original research articles with 15 still under review. (Note: In some cases, data could not be obtained from previous publishers; from printed records, it can be substantiated that more or less two-thirds of the current number of articles were published in the years preceding 2008.) In the same period, 70 research and review manuscripts were received. About 11 manuscripts were rejected without peer review.

Usually two, but occasionally three, peer reviewers are approached as necessary to facilitate the decision to publish or reject a submitted manuscript. In 2009, the number of peer reviewers used was 45, of whom seven had non-South African addresses. The peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the journal's records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in 2009 was 110 days for print. The publication frequency of the journal is four issues per year. Issues appear regularly on given dates as pre-scheduled.

The editor has been editing the journal for 22 years. The editor was appointed by the councils of the scientific societies involved but the appointment was not competitive. The editor has been re-appointed since the journal's inception. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively but by the respective scientific societies (South African Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (SASPEN), Nutrition Society) or professional organisations, i.e. the Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA). They are appointed for two years. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts, provide specific topical expertise and advise on editorial policies/practices. Board members are appointed from inside the country.

The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines, and there is a conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have always been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials; news and views as and when available/received; topical reviews; and book reviews and correspondence on published articles as and when available/received. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 80%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of articles in the *SAJCN* is notably good albeit very specific to the South African community; most are epidemiological studies and good examples of the best work done in SA in this field. Published articles are seldom by international authors, and then mainly from Africa. The journal publishes about 20 articles per annum in four issues. This is not an adequate number, given the research activities in nutrition in SA; more could be published.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Regular excellent editorials, book reviews and scholarly correspondence are published. Additional scholarly features are a strong point of the journal. English-language abstracts are properly formatted. Publication of *errata* was not observed. Good citation practice, presentation, layout, etc. are maintained.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a stimulus for junior graduates and staff. It compares well with leading international journals in the field. The policy of special supplements on specific issues is a good one. The journal is active in promoting CPD by using selected papers and a related questionnaire to obtain CPD points.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** If the journal wishes to attract more of the top-quality papers produced by nutritionists/dietitians/medics in South Africa, it will have to become an internationally indexed journal and then focus on developing a meaningful impact factor.

The journal has the potential to become a more international medium. Stimulating the publication of more laboratory-based nutritional research would be worthwhile. A possible way of improving the journal's international profile may be to include invited reviews from leading scientists at the cutting edge of nutritional research. Most of the articles are authored by established researchers; junior researchers too should be encouraged to publish in the journal. A capacity development programme is in place to encourage junior scientists to publish, and such support is provided when requested. The same principle applies to appointing reviewers from the broader community in the field in order to achieve a better demographic profile for the reviewers. These efforts can, however, be intensified and even formalised for better measures of progress.



The editor should seriously consider the publication of more basic research in addition to the current profile of community and clinical nutrition.

The Panel believes that the journal could possibly improve its international profile by initially including reviews by leading international scientists and of cutting-edge research.

### **Business aspects**

The journal's regular print run is 2 000 copies per issue; it is published by Medpharm Publications (Pty) Ltd since 2008. Both production and distribution are handled by the publisher in collaboration with professional societies. The journal carries paid advertising and unpaid advertising in the case of new products to keep the profession informed of developments. All expenses are covered by advertising and a small subsidy from each of the societies involved. No other subsidies or membership fees contribute to the business unit. IP is licensed to the publisher. The three societies offer the *SAJCN* as a feature of their respective memberships.

The journal has 16 non-society subscribers, and three societies are non-paying subscribers. The number of subscribers who are organisations, as opposed to individuals, is 1 610. The journal appears free online (open-access).

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Copyright arrangements are according to the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial – No Derivative Works 2.5 South Africa Licence.

The journal's ISI-type impact factor is in the process of being assessed. The *SAJCN* is published in English only. The journal has never been independently peer-reviewed previously. In principle, the editor would be interested for the journal to be considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free online, open-access journal but this will have to be put to the board for a decision; the *SAJCN* is also hosted by EBSCO.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

### **4.7.2 Current Allergy and Clinical Immunology**

**Focus and Scope:** *Current Allergy and Clinical Immunology* is the official journal of the Allergy Society of South Africa (ALLSA) and is produced as a service towards understanding and communicating in the field of allergy.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** Most members of the editorial board have a good publication record in both national and international journals, as well as good international standing as scientists.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 22 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published one original research paper and 77 review articles. In the same period, 81 manuscripts were received; none of them was rejected without peer review. Approximately 14% of accepted papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. About 12 reviewers were used in one year, of whom none had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is six to nine months. The publication frequency of the journal is four issues per year. Issues are pre-scheduled to appear in specific months.

The editor has been editing the journal for nine years; he was not appointed competitively, and the appointment period is indefinite. Editorial board members are not appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. Their appointment period is three years, but they can elect to stay on for an additional term. They are appointed from inside and outside the country, to provide specific topical expertise. They also handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies and practices. There are two editors at present appointed by the ALLSA Exco.

The journal does not have editorial policy guidelines, but does have a conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial/policy guidelines have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review* because there are no formal guidelines. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains scholarly value-adding features such as editorials, news and views (not in every issue, but as appropriate), book reviews and correspondence on published articles.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains mostly reviews and case reports, with very few original research articles. Reviews are of very good quality; however, the lack of original research contributions that report new research findings in the field, is a major drawback. The focus is only on local issues, within SA. Articles are mostly from local authors across the country, with a very small number of (presumably) invited reviews from Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. The number of articles per annum is comparatively low if compared with international accredited journal standards. It is not representative of the best work done in the country in the discipline, particularly since there are few or no original new research contributions published.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews and book reviews. Generally the language for all article abstracts is very good. No *errata* were noted. Citation practice is excellent. Good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions prevail.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline, in order to present an updated overview of the research discipline. However, for the latest experimental work in the research field, other journals would be better suited as they contain articles with original research. The journal is not comparable with leading international publications in the field.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** More international authors (or groups) should be encouraged to submit papers, and more original research articles should be solicited.

The Panel is very concerned about the limited research content of the journal; the editorial board should make every effort to increase this. Failure to do so is likely in future reviews to result in a commendation not to support continued listing of the journal on the DHET list of accredited journals.

**Business aspects**

The journal's print run is approximately 3 000 – 3 500 copies per issue; it is published by ALLSA. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries paid advertising and unpaid advertising for educational courses, etc. Financial sponsorship is not specifically received by the journal, but by ALLSA.

The journal is not subscription-based, but is free to all members of ALLSA and any interested health professionals. It appears free online (open-access).

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers, but to publish on their behalf for a fee. Authors assign copyright to the journal. Requests to republish for educational reasons are usually permitted, provided that acknowledgement is given, and authors are informed as a matter of courtesy. The journal has been previously independently peer-reviewed; however, application for MEDLINE was not accepted. The journal is indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS. The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

**Panel's consensus view:**

1. **The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).**

- II. Note should be taken of the need to increase the research content of the journal, as indicated under Suggested improvements.
- III. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.7.3 *Journal of Endocrinology, Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa (JEMDSA)*

**Focus and Scope:** *JEMDSA* is a peer-reviewed, medical journal that focuses on endocrinology, metabolism and diabetes. It carries research articles and letters, editorials, clinical practice and other medical articles and personal opinion, South African health-related news, obituaries, general correspondence, and classified advertisements.

**Editing functions:** Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editor-in-chief and all members of the board are well known internationally and nationally, with good publication records. The editor-in-chief is a renowned expert in the field.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 14 years, without significant interruptions in publication. Usually two to three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In 2009, 24 reviewers were used, of whom 31% had non-South African addresses. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is four months. The publication frequency of the journal is three issues per annum. The issues appear regularly on pre-scheduled dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for 14 years, and was appointed competitively for a period determined by the Society for Endocrinology, Metabolism and Diabetes of South Africa (SEMDSA). The editorial board members, however, are not appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. Their appointment period is determined by SEMDSA. Editorial board members screen manuscripts, select reviewers, and advise on editorial policies/practices. They are appointed from inside and outside the country, to provide specific topical expertise (including section editors according to specific areas of interest). Editorial board members also handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies and practices.

The journal publishes editorial policy guidelines, and also has a conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial/policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. *Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains scholarly value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews, and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 30%.

**Content:** quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.

**Consensus Review:** In general, good quality articles by experts are published. They are a good example of the best work done in this country in this field. Almost all articles focus on local problems. Submissions are mainly from authors across SA. A good number of articles appear per annum but, taking into account the volume of research being done in this area in SA, the figure could be higher. Nevertheless, quality is good and the reviews informative.

**Essential technical features:** English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation

**Consensus Review:** Ample use is made of editorials (mostly by members of the editorial board) and the correspondence columns. Most articles have English abstracts. *Errata* are suitably published. Good citation practice, presentation, layout, etc. prevail.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** Reviews are excellent, but more basic original research articles should appear. The content of the published articles is of international relevance and quality. There are insufficient top-quality basic papers to compete with higher impact journals. *JEMDSA* should, however, be useful for students and junior staff at tertiary institutions.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is still relatively young, but local researchers in this field should be per-

suaded to publish in it. More original research articles should be included. However, competing with well-established international journals would need a totally new editorial policy. This might not be the aim of the journal, which is maybe intended to fill a particular niche in South Africa.

The Panel is very concerned about the limited research content of the journal; the editorial board should make every effort to increase this. Failure to do so is likely in future reviews to result in a recommendation not to support continued listing of the journal on the DHET list of accredited journals.

### **Business aspects**

The journal's print run is 2 000 copies per issue; it is published by Medpharm Publications (Pty) Ltd. Production and distribution are done in-house by Medpharm. The journal carries paid advertising but not unpaid advertising. All expenses are covered by advertising, with no other subsidies or membership fee contributions to the business unit. IP is licensed to the publisher.

The number of paying subscribers is 1139, of whom six are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal appears free online (open-access) and it is also part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism.

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. The journal publishes front details such as titles, authors, addresses and English abstracts. If ASSAF's SciELO-South Africa platform provides an accessible additional index, the editor and publisher would in principle be interested in being considered for inclusion on the platform. The journal is already hosted and managed on an open-access database.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. Note should, however, be taken of the need to increase the research content of the journal, as indicated under Suggested improvements.**
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

## **4.8 Occupational Health/Physiotherapy/Optomety**

### **4.8.1 Occupational Health Southern Africa**

**Focus and Scope:** *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, the only dedicated journal for the occupational health disciplines in southern Africa, is the official journal and mouthpiece of The South African Society of Occupational Medicine, The South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners, The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene, and the Mine Medical Professionals' Association. Its objective is to keep occupational health practitioners current with the latest research, especially African-based. The journal is accredited by the DHET, and articles are peer-reviewed before publication. *Occupational Health Southern Africa* is published in alternate months (six issues per annum). The focus is on occupational medicine, nursing and hygiene, as well as primary health care at the workplace, safety and other employee health benefits. The content is relevant to managers, human resource consultants and the entire occupational health team. Primary health care at the workplace is included because many of the target health practitioners are located in clinics or medical centres on company premises or in the public sector. In addition, many of these services are provided by mine hospitals, and the doctors working there also form part of the subscriber base.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** There are currently two editors, both of whom have PhD degrees in occupational health.

**Questionnaire:** The current editors have been editing the journal for one year. Editors are appointed competitively for four years. The editorial board elects the editors from among the society/association members. It is intended that the editorship should rotate among the societies, with each society nominating a candidate for the position, and election taking place within the editorial board. One of the current editors is a member of the Mine Medical Professionals' Association; the other is a member of the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene. The editors handle peer review of individual manuscripts. Together with the editorial board, they advise on editorial policies/practices.

The editorial board members are affiliated to the SA Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners; the SA Society of Occupational Medicine; the SA Institute for Occupational Hygiene; or the Mine Medical Professionals' Association. Each society/association appoints two members and one alternate member to the board. New members are introduced on a rotation basis. Only one member stands down in any given year to ensure continuity and mentoring of the new member. Members are appointed for at least two years and are from South Africa.

The journal has been published for 18 years without significant interruption. Publication frequency is six issues per year. In the period under review (October 2010 - September 2012), the number of papers published was 48, of which one was a case study and three were review articles. Other types were: original research (26), and back-to-basics articles aimed at practitioners (11).

Fifty-six manuscripts were received in the review period. Five of these were rejected without peer review. About 17% of the published articles had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Two reviewers are normally approached, and three if one is new to the role. In 2012, 50 peer reviewers were used, of whom 60% had a non-South African address. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is four to five months for both print and online.

Editorial guidelines and conflict-of-interest policy are published. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines are in general aligned with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors guidelines. The journal contains value-adding features such as news and views, with each member society having one page per issue for such items.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** Articles are of varying quality. The number of articles per annum is not adequate, and they are not representative of the best work done in the country in the field. The articles focus mainly on local rather than regional topics or issues and most are submitted by local contributors.

Emphasis is on literature reviews and information-based articles, as well as on transcripts of papers presented and general conference information. Overall the journal tends towards a more upmarket, well-written, informative 'society/societies newsletter' than a research journal.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Proper abstracts appear with all articles, *errata* are published when necessary, and citation practice is good. The presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are good. Presentation and layout are glossy and colourful and include many images, but these are usually not academically related, e.g. photo of a burning car in an article on causes of workplace injuries, and photo's of people undergoing hearing tests. Articles are interspersed with advertisements, which creates some confusion as some of the latter include scientific data, e.g. graphs, which might appear to be part of the article.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is not comparable with leading international journals in the field. The research and articles are not particularly impressive, with little empirical content that was researched.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The journal should attempt to attract more original research articles and clinical case/population reports, and more in-depth occupational hygiene and epidemiological studies.

Efforts should be made to publicise and market the journal to health sciences faculties and their libraries. A rethink is needed about the use of images to provide 'human interest', as they detract from the academic content and messages.

The Panel is very concerned about the limited research content of the journal. The editorial board should make every effort to increase the research content. Failure to do so is likely in future reviews to result in a recommendation not to support continued listing of the journal on the DHET list of accredited journals.

### **Business aspects**

The publisher is Technique Publishers Ltd; the average print run is 2 476 copies. Production and distribution services are outsourced. The journal carries mainly paid advertisements which cover some 50% of costs; the remainder is derived from subscriptions.

There are currently 2 376 paying subscribers, of whom 2 284 are members of the professional societies to which the journal belongs. In addition, there are 92 non-member subscribers, some of which are organisations such as academic institutions. The journal is part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service, although at least one article per issue is open access. The application process for its inclusion in PubMed and the African Index Medicus is proceeding.

Electronic versions of articles by authors employed at universities are permitted to be uploaded onto their intranet with permission of the editorial board. Regarding the journal's inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa platform, the editorial board is aware of and supportive of the open-access movement, but would need to investigate further to determine a financially viable method for such a move.

Further development of the journal is being pursued in a number of ways. The possibility of obtaining funding for being twinned with a strong European or American occupational health journal is being explored to further develop the journal. The journal is the only occupational health and hygiene journal in Africa, but while it is titled *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, it has essentially been a South African journal in terms of subscriptions and manuscript submissions. The board aims to broaden readership and the contributor base in the Southern African Development Community(SADC) region by growing the subscriber base (e.g. a lower fee for the online version for subscribers in other African countries) and increasing the journal's educational role.

#### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals. Note should, however, be taken of the need to increase the research content of the journal as indicated under Suggested improvements.**
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

### **4.8.2 South African Journal of Occupational Therapy**

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy (SAJOT)* is the official journal of the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa (OTASA) and is a leading publication for research into occupational therapy (OT) in Africa. *SAJOT* publishes and disseminates research articles that contribute to scientific knowledge among the profession and its outcomes, with particular reference to service delivery in Africa. It provides a platform for debate about issues relevant to OT in Africa that will also contribute to development of the profession worldwide.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor and board members have national standing and an international profile. The editor is a retired professional who was Head of the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of the Witwatersrand for many years. She is a highly respected occupational therapist and well known for her research in public health and visual motor integration in children. She has published extensively and is known for her editorial skills.

**Questionnaire:** The journal is in its 39<sup>th</sup> year of publication without any significant interruption since introduction of the current format in the 1960s. Original papers published during the period under review comprised 44 peer-reviewed original articles, two letter-type articles and no reviews other than book reviews.

In the same period, 57 manuscripts were received – a very few were rejected without peer review. About 14% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address. Usually two to three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In one year, approximately 24 peer reviewers were used, of whom three had non-South African addresses.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is 18 - 24 months. The publication frequency of the journal is three issues a year, and they appear in a specific month as pre-scheduled.

The editor was appointed through nomination by Association membership and election. The appointment period is three years with further options. Editorial board members are appointed by nomination and invitation for a specific period. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices. Board members are appointed from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

There is a conflict-of-interest policy, which is applied. Authors do not know who reviews their articles, and reviewers are not appointed from the same institution as the author's. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as editorials, news and views, and book reviews, and has just begun to include correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is approximately 80%.

#### **Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The publication frequency is three issues per annum. Sixteen articles were published in 2010 and 26 in 2011. The significant increase in the number of articles in 2011 is attributable to a special edition which showcased the best research of the University of Stellenbosch as part of their 50-year anniversary celebrations. However, in general, major publication backlogs are evident from the editor's responses. It has fair to satisfactory national coverage in terms of both topics and provincial distribution of submissions. There is low international representation. The published articles were by authors from the Universities of the Witwatersrand, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Pretoria. Seven international authors contributed to the articles. The quality of the articles is mostly good, with a few of outstanding and international standard. Almost 50% of the research articles reflected a qualitative research design, while no randomised controlled studies were reported in the two years. The articles represent some of the best work in the country, and a mix of academics and clinicians contribute.

Human rights, rights to access rehabilitation, the rights of people with disabilities, poverty and HIV received much attention. Another focus area that was evident was the field of paediatrics and visual perception, normal development and skills for school performance.

#### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

##### **Consensus Review:**

Editorials, which include guest editorials, are included in every issue. Also published are book reviews, papers presented at conferences, letters and obituaries. Abstracts are included for all articles; citation practice is adequate.

Contents displayed on the cover helped to identify articles of interest. Presentation is generally very good in terms of layout, although the end of one article on occasion ran into the start of another, which can be confusing.

CPD questionnaires are available online for each article.

#### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal usually has about five research-based articles per issue. There is some comparability to the British *Journal of Occupational Therapy* (which publishes 13 issues a year!), although there is a preponderance of qualitative research articles.

The journal is listed on the EBSCO database and is thus accessible through university libraries. It appears to be a stimulus to students and faculty in the discipline; however, occupational therapists canvassed for an opinion, found the journal research articles irrelevant to their private practices.

#### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** There is probably a need for more issues per annum but capacity and/or funding are probably inadequate to achieve this.

There is a lack of articles reporting on the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions in most areas of practice. An increase in experimental and outcomes research that reports on evidence of effective interventions would make the journal more balanced. This research would probably only happen if universities were encouraged to put greater emphasis on these types of study designs in their research foci.

The listing on EBSCO host is a recent activity that makes the journal globally accessible. The editorial committee could consider listing the journal on other databases for wider accessibility.

The issues (three a year) do not appear in consistent months, but sometimes July or August and sometimes November or December. This inconsistency was rectified recently. The editorial committee must be careful not to accept substandard articles from other professionals that do not fit the focus of occupational therapy. Inclusion of other health care professionals is beneficial only if the articles comply with the standard of *SAJOT* articles and add to the body of knowledge of occupational therapy.

### **Business aspects**

The regular print run of the journal is 2 000 copies per issue, three times per annum. It is published by the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa. Production services are outsourced and distribution is done in-house. Sometimes the journal carries paid advertisements.

There are 1 340 individual subscribers who pay through membership fees of OTASA, 44 organisations (mainly universities) and four overseas subscriptions. The journal appears online as part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service.

The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers. Copyright is held by OTASA. In principle, the editor would be interested in the journal being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa open-access platform, but there would be issues of OTASA membership, as well as the financial viability of the journal, to resolve first.

### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

### **4.8.3 South African Journal of Physiotherapy**

**Focus and Scope:** The *South African Journal of Physiotherapy (SAJP)* is the official journal of the South African Society of Physiotherapy. This peer-reviewed journal aims to contribute to and document the advancements in the principles and practice of physiotherapy. Physiotherapy practice incorporates a diverse range of activity, and the journal aims to support physiotherapists, and publish material, from all areas of practice, be that in the clinical setting, education, research or management.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor is a well-respected physiotherapist with vast experience in publishing, education and musculoskeletal physiotherapy. She has a good understanding of research quality and reporting. Her personal experience covers a number of practice areas including neuromusculoskeletal, orthopaedic manipulation therapy (OMT), health promotion and education. She is involved with international conferences and often contributes to the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT). The peer reviewing system of the *SAJP* was revised in 2009 and resulted in improved quality of articles.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published since 1 948 without significant interruptions. The number of research articles published during the period under review comprised of: seven articles in 2006, nine articles in 2007, 14 articles in 2008 and nine articles in 2009 with 27 articles in other categories, e.g. pilot studies, clinical guidelines, case reports and reviews. From 2008 to 2009, the number of issues declined from three issues to two issues per annum. In the same period, 177 manuscripts were received; approximately 25% - 35% were rejected without peer review. Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. In 2008, about 20 peer reviewers were used.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication in print is 12 months. The publication frequency of the journal is three issues per annum. Issues appear regularly as pre-scheduled in March, July and November.



The editor has been editing the journal since 2009. She was trained as assistant editor for a year and then appointed for three years. Editorial board members are recommended by reviewers according to area of speciality and are appointed for three years. They handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices. The editorial team try to appoint board members from inside and outside the country to provide specific topical expertise.

The journal publishes editorial/policy guidelines. The editor will investigate whether these have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*.

*Errata* are published in all cases where these have become apparent.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** Many articles on teaching practices, physiotherapists' experience of AIDS patients, lower back pain, communication issues and patient satisfaction, knowledge and attitudes have appeared. A small number of articles are from private practitioners in the fields of sports injury, cerebral palsy and lower back pain.

Published articles were mainly by authors from the University of the Western Cape and a limited number of other national universities. Most articles were local and university-based, with a few from overseas.

Articles are categorised into six broad areas: (1) orthopaedic, neuromusculoskeletal and medicine, (2) public health and health promotion including HIV and women's health, (3) physiotherapy education and research methods, (4) cardiorespiratory, (5) disability and rehabilitation, and (6) neurology (adult and paediatric). Each area is represented by an editorial board member who is responsible for the peer-review process of a particular submission. This process ensures good quality, which was evident in most of the articles published in 2010 and 2011. Major publication backlogs are evident from the editor's responses.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** All published articles have proper English abstracts. An *erratum* was published. Citation practice is adequate. Contents on the cover helped to identify articles of interest. The presentation and layout are excellent, with good use of colour diagrams and pictures.

The journal classifies contributions into research articles, case reports, review articles, short reports, randomised controlled trials and qualitative articles. The criteria for each category were, however, not evident as some research articles were the same as case reports, but not classified as such. Additional features included book reviews, announcement of congresses and courses, and CPD questions for certain articles.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:**

Contributors were from South Africa, Poland, Scotland, Australia, Nigeria and Pakistan. There were an average of seven to 10 research articles per issue. There seems to be a preponderance of treatment-based articles with quantitative data. More issues per annum are needed, with a higher proportion of research articles per issue.

The journal is available electronically to association members/subscribers. It is a stimulus to students and staff in the discipline. Many, if not most, papers are of international standard; however, the sample sizes in many of the articles were insufficient and results could therefore not be generalised to other populations.

The journal is not listed on any databases, e.g. EBSCO host or Sabinet SA ePublications.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** Physiotherapists are fairly active in research in the country and consequently there is almost certainly a need for more issues per annum and possibly a few more research articles per issue. It would be an advantage if the Society could consider appointing full-time managers to deal with

non-discipline-specific items to increase the number of issues per year, and free the editors to control the quality of submissions. International journals with high impact factors produce at least six issues per annum. It is suggested that the aim of the editorial board should be to increase publication to six issues per annum. In addition, it is recommended that the journal should be listed on one or more databases for wider access, as well as considering electronic publishing.

Physiotherapists are respected nationally and internationally for much of their research; efforts must be made to ensure that at least some of the best local work finds its way into the journal. This inadequacy would partly be addressed by the few quality shortcomings identified in this review.

#### **Business aspects**

The journal's regular print run is 3 700 copies per issue; it is published by the South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP). Both the production and distribution services are outsourced. The journal carries paid advertising and also receives financial support through members' annual fees. In addition, the journal has 40 - 50 paying subscribers which include various organisations and libraries. It appears free online only to members of the SASP.

In principle, the editor would consider inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

#### **Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### **4.8.4 The South African Optometrist**

**Focus and Scope:** *The South African Optometrist* publishes original peer-reviewed papers on scientific and clinical research in optometry, ophthalmology, vision science and other related fields. Literature reviews, technological reports, researcher short notes, and case reports (of interesting or unusual vision and ocular problems) are also included. Book reviews, matters arising and letters to the editor are welcomed. Columns by invited authorities in specific fields are at times presented.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor, who has been editing the journal since 1996, is an experienced researcher and educator from the University of Johannesburg. He is one of two optometrists in the country with an NRF-rating. His research interests include software development and automation in measurement and analysis of ocular and vision parameters. He has published extensively in national and international journals and has received awards for scientific writing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 75 - 80 years, without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 60 peer-reviewed original papers and six book reviews. In the same period, 75 manuscripts were received of which only five were rejected without peer review. Approximately 19% of published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. About 26 - 30 reviewers were used per year, of whom 12% had non-South African addresses.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication on the web is three to six months (journal is available online only). The publication frequency of the journal is quarterly, in March, June, September and December.

Neither the editor nor editorial board were appointed competitively or serve for specified periods. The editorial board is appointed to provide specific topical expertise. Board members handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial policy guidelines, and has a conflict-of-interest policy. Where relevant, editorial/policy guidelines have been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal publishes *errata* where these become apparent. The journal contains editorials, news and views, topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published

articles as scholarly value-adding features. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is about 95%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus review:** Between 2007 and 2010, 60 articles (original research and case reports) and six reviews were published. Many different topics were covered including assessment procedures, technological innovations, perceptions of eye care services, eye care health promotion, night vision, several eye diseases, dyslexia, corneal studies, visual skills, tear biochemistry, optical lenses, photo toxic effects of sunlight, education and ethical issues. Published articles cover specific ailments applicable to practitioners in both the public and private sectors. Authors are from Johannesburg, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, Ghana and Australia.

Publication rates are close to submission rates, i.e. time to publication is dependent on the duration of the review process and not constrained by content limitations (articles per issue). The content represents a good sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline and is well presented, with use of colour. Statistical analysis is of a high standard with large sample sizes. However, abstracts are not written uniformly. Relatively few qualitative research papers appear.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Coverage includes research articles on optometry, ophthalmology and vision science, literature reviews, case reports, book reviews, news and letters. Abstracts are published for all articles. The citation practice is good and was consistent and accurate throughout the text. *Errata* are published when they become apparent. Presentation, layout and copy-editing interventions are also excellent.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is free online and compares well with the *Journal of Optometry* which has editorials, case reports, reviews and about three to six original articles per publication. It is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local undergraduate and postgraduate students, academics and practitioners in the field. Quality is comparable with other leading international journals in the field.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** While available online, the journal does not appear to be linked to health sciences faculty libraries. To promote access, all journals should at least negotiate availability with academic/health science libraries.

Thomson Reuters WoS accreditation would enhance the status of what appears to be a journal of international quality. Expansion of the editorial board to include international academics is likely to be of value.

**Business aspects**

The journal is published online only. The publisher is Sandesigns. Production is outsourced; distribution is not required (online only). The journal carries neither paid nor unpaid advertising, but receives financial sponsorship. The journal has no income other than the subsidy/support for costs that are estimated at somewhere between R50 000 and R80 000 per annum.

Copyright belongs to the sponsoring professional association that manages the journal production on behalf of its members. It is not indexed in either Thomson Reuters WoS or ProQuest IBSS. The journal has been independently peer-reviewed previously. The editor and publisher would not consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The journal should be invited to the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

#### 4.8.5 African Safety Promotion

**Focus and Scope:** *African Safety Promotion* is published by the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme, Medical Research Council and Unisa. *African Safety Promotion* is a forum for discussion and debate among scholars, policymakers and practitioners active in the field of injury prevention and safety promotion. It addresses a variety of injury and violence-related topics, e.g. injury surveillance methodologies, costing techniques, epidemiological research findings, health systems research, theoretical formulations of the risks and resiliencies associated with violence in low to middle-income contexts, theoretical and research investigations of benchmark injury prevention, and containment interventions.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** Editors have national standing, and some international, i.e. good international standing; experience in a wide area of psychology research including epistemology, research methodologies, violence, injury, safety and peace; have published extensively in peer-reviewed journals; edited and co-edited several books; and given presentations around the world.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for nine years without significant interruptions. In the period under review, the journal published 67 peer-reviewed original papers and 30 book reviews. In the same period, 98 manuscripts were received, of which only two were rejected without peer review. About 18 published papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually three peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript, and about 16 reviewers were used in total per year.

The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is nine months (for both print and online). The journal has recently commenced an online automated manuscript management and publication system, and consequently, whereas in the past the print publication appeared first, the move now is to online publication first. The publication frequency of the journal is two issues per annum (June and November).

The editor has been editing the journal for two years, and was not appointed competitively. The appointment period is unspecified. Editorial board members are also appointed for an unspecified period, are from inside and outside the country, and are also not appointed competitively. They provide specific topical expertise, handle peer review of individual manuscripts, and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial guidelines but has no conflict-of-interest policy. The journal's editorial and policy guidelines are in the process of being aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal has never published *errata*. The journal occasionally contains editorials, short conference and other non-research reports, and book reviews as scholarly value-adding features. All original empirical research and theoretical and review articles are peer-reviewed.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** For the period under review, many of the authors were affiliated to the Medical Research Council and Unisa, with others from African universities and abroad (Johannesburg, Free State, Pretoria, Cape Town, Botswana, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique, Canada, Sweden and Finland). Overall regional coverage is good.

The articles are generally of high quality with well-described methodology. Qualitative methods, descriptive studies and literature reviews were mostly used. The articles are well referenced with clear objectives and in-depth discussions. The majority of articles over the review period covered different aspects of violence in various countries (SA, Mozambique and Uganda). One article described motorcycle accident trauma in South Sudan, another was a review of family functioning, one about a national injury costing system, and one a literature review of legislation and clothing ignition burns in children in SA. These articles are a good sample of the different dimensions of violence and other safety issues in Africa.

It is questionable whether an output of two issues per annum can truly serve the needs of researchers, practitioners and professions in general; however, since publication rates are close to submission rates,

it might be that the balance is appropriate. On the other hand, there is the possibility that African researchers prefer to publish elsewhere.

### **Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful scholarly features such as editorials and book reviews. The published abstracts are of high quality but not all articles have abstracts. *Errata* are published when they become apparent.

The journal also publishes letters, and reports on conferences, courses, symposia and dedicated 'international days', e.g. about child abuse and geriatric concerns. The 14 reports published in the four issues over two years were comprehensive and would serve as a good archive of attempts to address violence, safety promotion, trauma and injury. Two book reviews were published.

All articles contained comprehensive abstracts that well reflected the content of the article.

The journal uses the American Psychological Association guidelines for referencing, and citations in the text were consistently accurate.

### **Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is a platform for multidisciplinary input. Authors of the articles that appeared in 2009-2011 seemed to be mostly of postgraduate level and well experienced. The journal seems to have a bias towards psychology and violence-related problems, but this may reflect bias in the sample studied. The journal is available as open access and listed on the database of Sabinet SA-ePublications. While there might not be directly comparable international journals, individual articles compare well with those in international journals.

### **Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of the articles is generally good but the number of research articles per issue could be increased. It would certainly be worthwhile to publicise and market this journal among health sciences university faculties within the country, region and continent to disseminate information and attract more article submissions.

Following some of the editorials in the journals, it was clear that all editorial board members strive for better quality, and some comments were made about changes that were implemented with good effect.

Editors perform their editorial duties on a voluntary part-time basis. Unfortunately, there are disadvantages to having part-time volunteers responsible for a scholarly journal, e.g. limited time to canvass for more articles, and consequently the content may be compromised. Turn-around time might also be affected. In this time-constrained era, it is important to explore ways to increase the output of scholarly work without compromising quality and rigour.

The Panel believes that with the move to open access and the associated ability to publish more articles, consideration should be given to formalising the nature of editorships, composition of the editorial board, and appointment of reviewers.

### **Business aspects**

The business proposition is not easy to fathom from the responses to the questionnaire, i.e. the journal appears to be subsidised to a significant extent. The move to an open-access model, while commendable in terms of providing easier access to local and regional data, might compromise sustainability in the longer term.

The regular print run of the journal is 400 copies per issue. Production is outsourced, and distribution is managed in-house. The journal carries neither paid nor unpaid advertising, and does not receive any financial sponsorship. The number of paying subscribers is 270, all of which are organisations.

The journal also appears free online (open access) and also as part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication. The journal has never received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers and has no copyright arrangements.

The journal is not indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS or ProQuest IBSS. The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

## 4.9 Cardiology

### 4.9.1 SA Heart

**Focus and Scope:** *SA Heart* is the official publication of the South African Heart Association, the organisation representing the professional interests of all cardiologists and cardiothoracic surgeons in the country.

The journal publishes peer-reviewed articles dealing with cardiovascular disease, including original research, topical reviews, state-of-the-art papers and viewpoints. Regular features include an electrocardiography (ECG) quiz, imaging in cardiology, and local guidelines. Case reports are considered for publication only if the case or cases are indeed unique, incorporate a relevant literature review, and contribute to improved patient management.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The editor-in-chief and most editorial board members are well-established researchers nationally and internationally, with good publication records. The editorial board comprises 11 senior cardiologists, cardiothoracic surgeons and cardiovascular researchers drawn from many local institutions. They represent a good cross-section of the most notable academics in the field working in this country.

**Questionnaire:** The questionnaire was not completed by the editor.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal has several reviews in each issue by international and national experts, often by invitation. All are of good quality. This is the most striking feature of the journal, and should be of great help to clinicians. However, the number of original articles is very low, although of reasonable quality. In a country which is known for the breadth and quality of its research in this field, this paucity suggests that *SA Heart* is not a target for those authors who wish to publish their best work in reputable scholarly publications. The overwhelming impression is one of a 'house journal' for specialists in the medical and surgical areas of cardiac medicine. The number of articles (reviews plus original articles) is approximately 24 per annum, from four issues.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, errata, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, and scholarly correspondence. All articles have English abstracts. Suitable *errata* are published. Citation practice is good. Presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are all good.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** The journal is a suitable stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline. The journal currently has no impact factor, hence comparisons with leading international journals are not possible.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The editorial board should try to solicit more original research articles and increase contributions from non-South African authors to assist in gaining a higher rating. The Panel believes that the journal needs to decide what its real purpose is and focus on that.

**Business aspects**

The questionnaire was not completed by the editor.

**Panel's majority view:**

- I. The journal should not continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.
- II. The publisher/editor should not be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform (since it is not a true research journal).

**4.9.2 Cardiovascular Journal of South Africa (now titled Cardiovascular Journal of Africa)**

**Focus and Scope:** The *Cardiovascular Journal of Africa (CVJA)* is particularly concerned with publication of scientific articles related to cardiac and vascular conditions and issues in South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa in general, but will accept articles from all parts of the world. More basic scientific articles related to clinical aspects, for elucidation, in-depth understanding and therapeutic approaches, are accommodated.

**Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The journal's editor-in-chief is of high national and international disciplinary standing, and is assisted by an assistant editor and three regional editors. The editorial board comprises 15 discipline-specific members of national or international reputation. In addition, there is an international advisory board of eight members, most of whom have an impressive publication record in both national and international journals.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 25 years without significant interruptions in publication. In the period under review, the journal published 213 peer-reviewed original papers (30% case reports), 15 letter-type articles and 50 reviews. In the same period, 486 manuscripts were received, of which 50 were rejected without peer review. Approximately 48% of accepted papers had at least one author with a non-South African address.

Usually two peer reviewers are approached for each submitted manuscript. About 135 reviewers were used in the past three years, and approximately 45% of the reviewers had non-South African addresses. Peer review reports are accessibly retained in the records. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is four months for print and two months for online. The publication frequency of the journal is six issues per annum, and issues appear on pre-scheduled given dates.

The editor-in-chief had been editing the journal for one year as the acting editor-in-chief. The editor-in-chief was not appointed competitively, and the appointment period is indefinite. The editorial board was not appointed competitively, and the appointment period is indefinite. Members are appointed to provide specific topical expertise, handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies/practices.

The journal publishes editorial policy/author guidelines and has a conflict-of-interest policy. The editorial/policy guidelines have not been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. Errata are published. The journal contains scholarly value-adding features such as editorials, news and views (occasionally), topical reviews, book reviews and correspondence on published articles. The percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer-reviewed original material is 75%.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The quality of the articles published is generally average to good. The journal publishes some of the best work done in the field in SA. The focus is mostly on regional/local problems. However, since the journal changed its name from *Cardiovascular Journal of South Africa* to *Cardiovascular Journal of Africa*, the focus has extended to problems elsewhere in Africa. Authors are from across SA, but increasingly from Africa and the rest of the world. Between eight and 12 peer-reviewed items appear per issue, yielding between 80 and 100 articles and case reports per annum. This is an impressive performance which has been sustained for nearly 20 years. Although the short reports/images/drug trends, etc. are useful, it may be preferable to reduce that number and increase the number of original manuscripts by one or two.

## Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation

**Consensus Review:** The journal contains useful additional scholarly features such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews and scholarly correspondence. All articles have proper English abstracts. *Errata* are published when they become apparent. Citation practice is good. Presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions are all good.

## Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability

**Consensus Review:** The journal is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline. The journal compares well with good international journals.

## Suggested improvements

**Consensus Review:** The editor-in-chief and editorial board are to be congratulated in achieving an international impact factor. Their focus should now be on improving this. It is possible that increasing the number of original research articles and decreasing the number of short reports/images/drug trends/letters may assist in improving the international rating.

The journal should continue to attract more and more contributions from other African countries, requiring participation in the editorial and peer-review processes, and leading to a situation where the journal can become in effect a very powerful medium for cardiological progress in Africa as a whole.

## Business aspects

The journal's print run is 1 500 copies per issue, and it is published by Clinics Cardive Publishing. Both the production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries paid advertising and, occasionally, unpaid advertising. It does not receive financial sponsorship.

The journal appears free online via PubMed Central and is hosted on Sabinet SA ePublications database. There are approximately 100 paying subscribers of whom 80% are organisations. The journal is indexed in Thomson Reuters, WoS and Elsevier Scopus. Articles are usually in English, and front details such as title, authors, addresses, and English abstract are mandatory. The editor and publisher would not consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO South Africa as a free online, open-access journal.

## Panel's consensus view:

- I. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals (over and above its entitlement to this in terms of policy as a Thomson Reuters WoS-indexed periodical).
- II. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.

## 4.10 Dentistry

### 4.10.1 South African Dental Journal

**Focus and Scope:** The journal provides a platform for both scientific publication and the dissemination of news pertinent to members of the South African Dental Association. Essentially the policy is, as far as possible, to publish research and clinical papers submitted by South African authors although the journal will occasionally accept papers from elsewhere. The journal appears 10 times a year and is an automatic membership benefit of the South African Dental Association. The journal is, in fact, the only accredited dental publication in Southern Africa and therefore offers an important research resource in the country. In addition, and included in each issue, are short communications dealing with specific aspects of dentistry together with a regular column of information provided by the Association. The journal also offers members a CPD opportunity by providing a questionnaire in each issue which is accredited for points.

## Editing functions: Standing, spread, international participation, peer review, etc.

**Consensus Review:** The editor and members of the editorial board have a high national standing and reputation and in some cases a good international standing.

**Questionnaire:** The journal has been published for 60 years without interruption. The publication frequency of the journal is 10 issues per annum. The published issues of the journal are pre-scheduled to



appear on specific dates. In the period 2006 - 2008, the number of published peer-reviewed original articles was 84, of which 38 were letter-type articles and 15 review articles.

The number of received manuscripts published in the same period was 175. Of these 175 manuscripts, six were rejected without peer review. Twenty-six published articles had at least one author with a non-South African address. Two to three reviewers are approached for each manuscript and, in 2008, 66 reviewers were used. All reviewers had a South African address. Peer-review reports are accessibly retained in the records for five years. The average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication is six months for print and online. The issues of the journal are not pre-scheduled to appear on specific dates.

The editor has been editing the journal for eight years and was not appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. The editor is appointed for a three-year period which is renewable. Editorial board members handle peer review of individual manuscripts and advise on editorial policies and practices. They are not appointed competitively following advertisement and a selection process. They are from within South Africa and appointed for an indefinite period.

Editorial guidelines and the conflict-of-interest policy are published, and have been aligned with the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*. The journal publishes *errata* in all cases where these have become apparent. The journal contains value-adding features such as news and views, and the member society is allocated one page per issue for such items. The editorial board selects topical themes for specific issues.

**Content: quality, focus, spread within domain, sample of best work in SA, enrichment features, etc.**

**Consensus Review:** The best work done in SA is clearly not published in this journal. The articles are submitted by local authors of almost no international standing. The quality of published articles is reasonably good. The journal focuses on local and regional problems and issues, but there is in fact very little in the field of dentistry that can be classified as local or regional. Although some diseases may be more prominent in SA, it should be borne in mind that the country is part of the global village struggling with similar problems.

**Essential technical features: English abstracts, *errata*, citation practice, presentation**

**Consensus Review:** Additional features are adequate (with the exception of topical reviews that should be increased) and the journal is comparable to other top international dental journals linked to their respective dental associations. Proper English abstracts for all articles are published. Although the publishing of *errata* appears to be policy, none was evident.

Citation practice is good, as are presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions. There are useful additional scholarly features, such as editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc.

**Usefulness in capacity development, and international comparability**

**Consensus Review:** Short topic discussions aimed at the general dentist are commendable, but these compare poorly with international journals. The publication is suitable as a general ongoing stimulus for local graduate students and junior staff in the discipline, especially for CPD.

**Suggested improvements**

**Consensus Review:** The editor should be discouraged from authoring or co-authoring articles in the journal (although this occurred on only one occasion). International reviewers should be used where possible and the perception dispelled that reviewers are ignored without feedback. This latter issue has received attention.

**Business aspects**

The publisher is E-Doc Publishers and the average print run is 4 500 copies. Production and distribution are outsourced. The journal carries both paid and unpaid advertising.

The average number of paying subscribers is approximately 3 057, of whom 57 are organisations as opposed to individuals. The journal is part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism. The journal has received offers to purchase from multi-national publishers.

The journal's copyright is held by the South African Dental Association. The editor and publisher would consider an invitation for inclusion in ASSAf's SciELO-South Africa as a free, online, open-access journal.

**Panel's consensus view:**

- i. The journal should continue to be listed on the DHET list of accredited journals.**
- ii. The publisher/editor should be invited to consider joining the evolving SciELO-South Africa platform.**

## Appendix A:

### Questionnaire sent to each Editor of Journals being Peer-Reviewed

Please type in a short answer, just after each question, and send us your consolidated response as an MSWord document.

**1. Editorial process-related criteria (generally based on the *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review* developed by ASSAf):**

- For how many years has your journal been published?
- Have there been significant interruptions in publication?
- How many peer-reviewed original papers have you published during the last three years:  
Articles?  
Letter-type articles?  
Reviews?
- How many manuscripts (of all three types) were received in the same period?
- Approximately how many manuscripts of all three types were rejected without peer review?
- What proportion of papers of all three types that you published had at least one author with a non-South African address?
- How many peer reviewers are usually approached for EACH submitted manuscript?
- How many peer reviewers were used in total, in any ONE of the last three years?
- What proportion of these had non-South African addresses?
- Are peer-review reports accessibly retained in your records?
- What is the average period between receipt of a manuscript and its publication  
in print?  
on the web?
- What is the publication frequency of your journal, per year?
- Are issues of your journals pre-scheduled to appear on given dates?
- If scheduled, do the issues in fact appear regularly on the scheduled dates?
- How long have you been Editor/Chief Editor of this journal?

- Were you appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?  
For what period?
- Do members of your Editorial Board  
handle peer review of individual manuscripts?  
advise on editorial policies/practices?
- Are they appointed competitively (i.e. following advertisement and a selection process)?  
for a given period?  
from inside and outside the country?  
to provide specific topical expertise?
- Do you have published editorial/policy guidelines?
- Is there a conflict-of-interest policy?
- Have your editorial/policy guidelines been aligned with the ASSAf *National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review*?
- Do you publish *errata* in all cases where these have become apparent?
- Does your journal contain value-adding features such as  
editorials?  
news and views?  
topical reviews?  
book reviews?  
correspondence on published articles?
- What is the percentage of pages in each issue that represents peer- reviewed original material?

## 2. Business-related criteria:

- What is the regular print run of your journal?
- Who is the publisher?
- Is production and distribution outsourced?
- Do you carry advertising which is  
paid?  
unpaid?
- Do you receive financial sponsorship(s)?
- What is the number of paying subscribers?

- How many of the subscribers are organisations as opposed to individuals?
- If your journal appears online, is it free online (open access)?  
is it part of a commercial (pay-to-view and/or pay-to-subscribe) e-publication service?  
is it part of a non-commercial e-publication mechanism (e.g. Medline)?
- What is your journal's (average) total income per annum?
- What is your journal's total expenditure per annum?
- Have you had offers to purchase from multi-national publishers?
- What are your copyright arrangements?

### **3. Bibliometric assessments:**

- Is your journal indexed in Thomson Reuters WoS and/or the IBSS?
- Have Thomson Reuters WoS type impact factors (e.g. Google Scholar or Scopus) ever been determined for your journal?
- If articles are not in English, are "front details" like titles, authors, addresses, and English abstracts mandatory?
- Has your journal ever been independently peer-reviewed before?

### **4. General:**

- Would you (and our publisher) in principle be interested in being considered for inclusion in ASSAf's proposed SciELO South Africa as a free online, open access journal (project description recently circulated to all editors) ?
- Have you any other information or comments that may be useful to the Panel?

## Appendix B:

### Requests to Independent Peer Reviewers

1. Do the hard copies of the last two to three years of issues of the journal reflect:
  - 1.1 high national/international disciplinary reputations/standing of the editor-in-chief/associate editors/members of the editorial board?
  - 1.2 a high/good (general/average) quality of the articles accepted/published?
  - 1.3 a (contextually) adequate/good number of articles per annum?
  - 1.4 an (adequate/good) sample of the best work done in the country in the discipline/field?
  - 1.5 a focus on local/regional kinds of materials/problems?
  - 1.6 publication of articles by authors from across the country, and internationally?
  - 1.7 useful additional scholarly features like editorials, topical reviews, book reviews, scholarly correspondence, etc?
  - 1.8 proper (English-language) abstracts for all articles?
  - 1.9 suitable publication of *errata*?
  - 1.10 good citation practice?
  - 1.11 good presentation, layout, style and copy-editing interventions?
  - 1.12 suitability as a general on-going stimulus for local graduate students/young staff in the discipline concerned?
  - 1.13 some kind of comparability with leading international journals in the field?
2. Please list your suggestions for an improvement programme for the journal?









2014

# Report on Grouped Peer Review of Scholarly Journals in the Health Sciences and Related Medical Fields

Academy of Science of South Africa

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