

Changes to the *Journal* – adapt or perish?



Like all things, the *South African Journal of Sports Medicine* has to evolve and adapt to meet ever-changing challenges. The first major challenge we are currently faced with is to resolve the conflict between keeping the appearance of the *Journal* professional, while meeting the cost of production. The distribution of the SAJSM is miniscule (± 400) compared

with that of its big brother, the *South African Medical Journal*, which has a distribution of about 16 000. This small distribution raises the cost of production significantly and prevents the *Journal* from expanding much beyond its current length of about 30 pages per issue. A logical way to contribute to the costs of production is to get advertisements in the *Journal*. Clearly the small distribution affects the ability to attract advertisers and sponsors. We also have to accept advertisements with discretion to prevent unscrupulous companies getting recognition through their association with a credible organisation. Discussions are underway with the publishers of the *Journal* to meet these challenges. One simple contribution that all SASMA members can make is to encourage non-members to sign up – this would double the membership without much effort and contribute significantly to the financial status of the *Journal*.

The next challenge facing the *Journal* is to ensure that all the articles meet strict ethical standards. Most high-quality journals now require that published papers be passed by the ethics and research committees of the institutions in which they were done, and that all subjects in the studies give informed consent. We are in the process of revising the guidelines for authors and these points will certainly be incorporated.

This issue of the SAJSM contains an important consensus document describing methods for injury surveillance in cricket. This important document, which has had input from researchers in six countries, is the first paper to describe a set of detailed guidelines for reporting injuries in a specific sport. The paper describes the definition for injury, the definition for injury recovery and injury recurrence, and also the definitions for season, teams, matches and cohorts. The paper also describes the calculation of injury incidence and injury prevalence, followed by an injury classification system. The descriptions are detailed and unambiguous which will make it easy for researchers around the world to adopt the guidelines in their research. The manner in which the paper has been written, and the fact that the guideline has been reached by consensus with input from cricket researchers

from different countries, will make this a classic paper referred to in all future studies on cricket and injuries. The paper has been published concurrently in three other journals (the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, the *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, and the *New Zealand Journal of Sports Medicine*). This is an unusual step and the fact that the editors of these journals granted permission for it to be published simultaneously in other journals, testifies to its importance. There is no doubt that this paper will accelerate the depth of cricket research and will set an example for researchers in other sports. It is very likely that in the future journals will not accept papers describing injuries in cricket unless they have subscribed to the recommendations outlined in this paper.

All the other papers published in this issue have a strong South African flavour. This is encouraging because it shows that the scope of research in South Africa is broadening and that questions specific to South African conditions are being addressed. The study by Venter *et al.* profiles Boland netball players and compares their results with those of Australian under-21 players. The studies show that many of the parameters for the Boland netball players, who are representative of South African netball players, were lower than those of their Australian counterparts. The study should be useful for coaches as it shows the fitness standards needed for world-class performances in this sport.

The study by Nortje *et al.* examines the views of elite swimmers on achieving swimming excellence in South Africa. It was not surprising that the elite swimmers believed that they needed to receive better funding to assist them in achieving faster times. The other points raised by the swimmers in this article make for interesting reading and provide practical information that can be acted on by the administrators in charge of swimming.

Finally, the study by Millson and co-workers examines the nature and incidence of injuries in a Currie Cup rugby team from 2001 to 2003. The study found that the number of injuries increased as the season progressed, while there was overall reduction in the injury rate over the three seasons. The authors were able to speculate that the reduction in injury rate was attributable to the continuous evaluation and management of training strategies that evolved over the study period. The study emphasises the importance of good record-keeping by the medical support staff of a team and also highlights the importance of having clear injury definitions so that the data from different studies can be compared and interpreted.

Enjoy the read!

Mike Lambert
Editor-in-Chief