Editorial: Name change for the journal: SAJEI becomes SAJID

The journal has undergone a number of changes since its inception as The Southern African Journal of Epidemiology 28 years ago. At that time, it amalgamated with the newly initiated Southern African Journal of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and was a joint venture of three societies, namely the Infectious Diseases Society of Southern Africa, the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Society of Southern Africa and the Epidemiological Society of Southern Africa. There have been four editors-in-chief since 1986. The two longest-serving editors were Prof Hendrik Koornhof, who still contributes substantially to the journal as Editor Emeritus, and the present Editor-in-Chief, Prof Charles Feldman. The other two editors were the late Prof Ray Smego, an infectious diseases physician, and the first editor, Dr Patrick Hessel, an epidemiologist. Associate editors during the 1990s and 2000s included Profs Ron Ballard, Barry Schoub, Shan Naidoo, Bernard Fourie, Carel Ijsselmuiden, Lucille Blumberg and John Frean.

A multitude of changes involving the journal have occurred since 2003:
• A new editor-in-chief was appointed.
• Changes were made to the editorial board.
• It acquired a new, modern look.
• A website was launched and the journal became fully “open access”
• The journal became the mouthpiece of all of the infectious diseases societies that belong the Federation of Infectious Diseases Societies of Southern Africa (FIDSSA).

In 2012, the journal was submitted for evaluation to be included in Index Medicus by the National Library of Medicine, USA. Although it did not get indexed, scores and comments from the reviewers and subsequent discussions with the Medline consultants, indicated to us that it was considered to be worthy of indexing, but needed to comply with certain additional conditions of publication, following which re-submission was encouraged.

However, financial viability is the greatest challenge facing the journal now, a problem that is being faced by many journals, particularly in South Africa, but also internationally. Various initiatives have been embarked upon to address this issue, including an approach to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, an institution which currently makes a regular contribution to the journal. Against this background, and for a variety of reasons, including financial, the journal became fully electronic this year. Print copies are reserved for special editions or for reprints.

Concomitant with being published electronically, the journal has also undergone a name change, recommended and approved by FIDSSA, and which was also in line with our attempts to become indexed. The journal’s new name is the Southern African Journal of Infectious Diseases (SAJID). It will continue to publish suitable epidemiological studies, provided that they relate to infectious diseases.

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