

SSMJ marks ten years of continuous quarterly publication

With this issue in November 2017, the South Sudan Medical Journal marks its tenth anniversary of continuous uninterrupted quarterly publication since the first issue in February 2008. It has published 40 issues in ten volumes with approximately 66 research papers and 113 clinical guidance articles, in addition to editorials, reports, news items and excerpts from medical journals.

Following each publication, the hits on the SSMJ website indicate a wide interest from many countries in the world. The journal is now listed in the African Journals Online (AJOL) in South Africa, exposing it to a wider international readership, with average abstract views of 200 and 300 downloads of individual articles per month.

I co-founded the journal with Dr David Attwood to provide up-to-date clinical information to healthcare professionals (Doctors, Nurses, Midwives, Clinical Officers, Public Health Officers and other healthcare professionals) who deliver healthcare in South Sudan, especially those in areas with little or no access to clinical guidelines, or continuing professional development (CPD). Emphasis has been placed on a simple and easily understandable style of writing to ensure that the wide range of healthcare professionals reading it understand the presented material.

At its inception, my secretary, Madeleine Linington, volunteered to prepare the journal which was circulated through a page on the Saint Mary's Hospital, Newport, Isle of Wight website prior to the development of a dedicated website. Within months of its foundation the Editorial Board was joined by Ann Burgess, a nutritionist and author who assumed the role of Editorial Adviser. The present Board is composed of my British colleagues: Dr David Tibbutt, Cardiologist, and Dr James Ayrton, Anaesthetist, and South Sudanese professionals: Dr Edward Eremugo Luka, Epidemiology and Public Health, Professor John Adwok Adieng, General and Endocrine Surgeon, Professor James Hakim, Cardiology and HIV Research, Professor Charles Bakheit, Statistician, Dr Wani Mena, Ophthalmologist, Dr Charles Ocheri Langoya, registrar in clinical haematology in UK, and Dr Ayat Constantine Jervase, HIV/AIDS/STIs.

As Founding Editor-in-Chief I wish to express my most profound gratitude to the Editorial Board for supporting the development of the journal in its first decade, especially Edward Luka who has redesigned the journal and prepares it for publication, and also to Rob Flooks, who has uploaded almost all issues onto our website, and James and Rachel Ayrton for help with developing the website.

I thank too those colleagues in various professions who have peer reviewed articles and helped to edit them. Those who contributed articles come from varied backgrounds and countries, with the majority coming from South Sudan, also Nigeria, Tanzania, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Chad and Cameroon, among others. To them I express my heartfelt thanks on behalf of the South Sudanese healthcare professionals reading the journal.

The transfer of the role of Editor-in-Chief to Dr Edward Luka, who is based in South Sudan, denotes the success of transferring of the leadership of an influential project such as the SSMJ to a local professional. This is a model of teamwork which other development projects in the South Sudan might emulate in the future.

The challenges for the future include: securing regular funding from donations or other sources to produce print copies for circulation to rural areas of South Sudan where there is no access to the internet; promotion of healthcare research to improve healthcare delivery; and encouraging South Sudanese to undertake original research in various areas of healthcare and publishing their results in the journal.

Other plans include improving our [website](#), and making more use of social media to disseminate useful healthcare information.

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