

From the Editor's Desk

December 2009

This has been a very successful year for *The South African Optometrist* in terms of the number of original papers submitted for possible publication. Several papers intended for publication during 2009 could not be included due to severe limitations regarding available space and they will only appear in, probably, the first issue of the journal in 2010. Although, the journal is presently only published quarterly the total number of pages included per annum has steadily expanded and, in the near future, it is very likely that due to the rapidly increasing volume of material received that it will become more difficult to have papers accepted for publication. Authors are also likely to wait longer for their papers to appear in press. Also, as for some optometric journals in other parts of the world, the general standard of papers received and accepted by *The South African Optometrist* has gradually improved. As the number of paper submissions increases so the number of rejected papers also enlarges through a more highly selective approach to acceptance of manuscripts. While this is not always pleasant for authors, it is great news for the journal in that it suggests optometric science and more specifically research-related activities and optometric publishing in South Africa are all gradually expanding.

Another promising aspect is that we are also getting more original papers and other contributions submitted to the journal from

other parts of the world. Much of this material has arrived from other parts of Africa, where there is greater awareness of the journal, but slowly we are expanding our impact and receiving submissions from other geographic regions. Mostly, the digital and open-access nature of the journal is playing an important role towards this international growth.

Our readership is also growing and statistical assessment suggests positive results concerning increasing numbers of hits and downloads from our website at www.saoptometrist.co.za. Thus internet access to the journal and its content indicates very promising development over the few years (from 2004) when the journal changed from a purely hard copy format (with a relatively static number of subscribers) to an electronic format only. But, naturally the Editor and Editorial Board for the *S Afr Optom* would like to see the journal enjoying even greater impact worldwide and overall the signs are very promising that, with time, this should occur. But such growth cannot occur without close involvement of the authors, reviewers (of papers) and others such as the South African Optometric Association and journal publishers without which there would be no academic and scholarly vision-related journal of any nature in South Africa. Indeed, the *S Afr Optom* is the only South African journal available involving vision science and eye care for optometric and



ophthalmologic researchers and academics to publish original research and other material of a high standard following a process of comprehensive peer review. The journal indirectly supports researchers via research subsidies from the Department of Education and is an essential historic record of the contributions of mostly South African optometry but occasionally that of ophthalmology, and of academics and researchers and others towards the promotion of science and education and further expansion of knowledge relating to eye care and vision science. Thanks are thus extended to all who have contributed over the past year towards ensuring the journal plays its vital role towards supporting and promoting academic and research-related activities in optometry and vision science in South African and international contexts.

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