This edition of the South African Journal of Anaesthesia and Analgesia marks a new era in the history of this publication and its relationship with the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists. The Journal was started at the instigation of Andrew Thomas of In House Publications in 1995, with Professor Ted Shipton as the editor; publishing mainly non-peer-reviewed overview articles. When Professor Shipton emigrated to New Zealand, editorship of the Journal was taken over by Professor Chris Lundgren in 2001 and it was adopted as the official Journal of SASA in September of that year. Professor Lundgren broadened the base of the editorial board, involving members from most of the academic institutions in South Africa, and instituted a system of peer review for published articles. Subsequently, the Journal was granted Department of Education (DoE) accreditation, which means that published articles from academic institutions attracted research subsidies from the DoE. This important step forward meant that the Journal was able to attract articles of better quality, and the subsequent years have seen a steady upsurge in the level of publication. During 2006, following an initiative instigated by Professor Lundgren, the SASA Council decided to purchase the Journal, together with its website, from In House Publications. A new publishing agreement has been established with Douw Greeff of Medpharm Publications and promises an exciting future for the official Journal of our society.

The new publishing agreement will include an internet editorial office for online submissions and a manuscript managing system. The journal will also be transformed into a fully-fledged electronic journal that is accessible to all SASA members. Open access to SAJAA abstracts will also give SAJAA authors wide indexing in electronic databases.

A major focus area for the new SAJAA is the development of the review article section to include peer-reviewed overview articles by our local opinion leaders. Peer-reviewed review articles earn DoE research subsidies for academic departments and contribute tremendously to the readership of the journal. The following contributions will be welcomed:

- Case studies (2 400 words)
- Critical appraisals of clinical trials (200-word trial summary and 200-word commentary)
- Drug reviews (3 600 words) (3 pages)
- Clinical reviews (3 600 words) (3 pages)

The following focus areas have been identified: regional anaesthesia, paediatric anaesthesia, acute and chronic pain management, intensive care and articles aimed at GPs and DA students.

Case reports can be a valuable contribution to practice knowledge, particularly in a regional journal such as ours, and are always of interest to practical clinicians. To be of value, a case report should make a significant addition to our knowledge of a subject. That is, it should either document the management of a rarely encountered, and previously undescribed, problem (for example, a paediatric syndrome, such as the syndromic vignettes contributed by Prof Bösenberg), or provide a new solution to a previously described problem. Simply describing a well-managed (or badly managed) case is not sufficient to justify publication. Nevertheless, practitioners continually approach me with interesting and difficult problems, many of which would be worthy of presentation to a larger forum. I would like to encourage all of our readers to consider submitting interesting problem cases for publication in the Journal and dissemination to the large readership the Journal now deserves. An active correspondence section discussing such cases will also contribute to the growth of the Journal. The success of this Journal will depend on the support it is able to obtain from the South African anaesthetic fraternity. Now that SASA owns this Journal in its entirety, it is imperative that SASA members contribute their ideas and experiences.

The establishment of a new journal is never an easy process and requires determination, hard work and, most important of all, the ability to attract quality publications from established academics and clinicians. Achieving DoE accreditation was an important first step, but the next crucial achievement will be to attain a MEDLINE listing. In general, academics want their published work to be accessible to other researchers and, for this reason, most would choose to publish in a journal that is MEDLINE listed. In preparing SAJAA for inclusion in MEDLINE, SAJAA would also need to be included in other important smaller databases, like Scopus, Index Copernicus, EMBASE and Google Scholar. If the new Journal is to achieve this goal, it is imperative that our leading authors contribute and I would urge all academic departments to encourage the submission of articles so that our Journal can grow into a prestigious international publication.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Professor Lundgren and her editorial team on having brought the Journal to this new juncture and wish them every good fortune in this venture.

“The success of this Journal will depend on the support it is able to obtain from the South African anaesthetic fraternity.”

Professor MFM James
President
SASA