

## Open letter to the Family Doctors of South Africa

Dear Colleague

As the acting editor of the new look South African Family Practice journal, I would like to take some time to share some of my ideas about the future of the journal.

I have taken up the challenge as acting editor because I believe we need to refocus the journal. Our disease-centered training has created an impression that family practice is merely a dish made up of all other disciplines. While this may have been true at the beginning of the century, the rest of the world has long since discovered that family practice has its own rich and unique body of knowledge.

After reading some medical journals, you may well be left wondering if you know anything of value. Yes, our patients

suffer from all those medical conditions they write about, but mostly they suffer from an illness, of which the disease is only a part. Apart from diagnosing disease we need to deal with their illnesses, their feelings and their families. Where do we read about that?

I believe we need to read and write about our patients and their illnesses as we encounter and deal with them every day in our practices. We need to share these experiences with our colleagues as often as possible and this journal is the ideal medium through which we can achieve this. Don't shy away from contributing simply because you have no experience in writing for a journal. Part of my job will be to help contributors to polish their writing skills. We do not want to miss out on valuable contributions simply because

you have no experience in writing for a journal. Part of my job will be to help polish writing skills. We do not want to miss out on valuable contributions simply because you feel your effort is not "good enough".

Finally, we need to realise that we need to support our journal by reading it and contributing to it. If we do not, we may lose a great opportunity to add value to our discipline by exploring and sharing new knowledge. We need to break way from just being passive receivers of "knowledge" and accept responsibility for meeting our own professional learning needs. We owe that to our patients, our profession and ourselves.

Let us make SA Family Practice the only journal family practitioners really need to read!

*Pierre de Villiers*

## The Team of Editors

Your 'new look' editorial team will be taking up responsibilities as outlined below. We are here to meet your needs, so please feel free to contact any one

of us that you may think is appropriate with any comments, criticism, ideas, articles or feedback. The highly skilled and representative editorial board will be

working with us as well. We look forward to having you participate in this **your** journal. Remember it is the only one you need to read!

**Pierre de Villiers**  
Acting Editor



Will be responsible for the overall scientific standard of the journal.

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