Occupational Health Southern Africa – a brief history

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Abstract

Occupational Health Southern Africa is the only accredited occupational health journal in the region. It was founded in 1995 by the South African Society for Occupational Medicine (SASOM) and the South African Society for Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN), and was later joined by the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) and the Mine Medical Professionals Association (MMPA). The journal provides a platform for scholarly engagement through the publication of peer-reviewed research articles, opinions, reports, news and related matters.

In 2004, the journal was accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training and, in 2011, it was added to the SABINET African Journals online platform to enhance its accessibility and visibility. It is also listed on African Index Medicus. In 2017, the manuscript submission and review processes moved to an online platform. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a switch from print to digital publishing in 2019, which also prompted the overhaul of the website to make it more appealing, and comparable to top international scientific journal websites. That same year, an Editorial Advisory Panel, which includes international occupational health experts, was constituted to augment the expertise of the Editorial Board, which is constitutionally comprised of representatives of the stakeholder occupational health societies.

Over the years, the Editorial Board, Advisory Panel, and publisher have worked to transform the original magazine-type publication into a respected scientific journal. The journal conforms to the policies, procedures and guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) to promote best practices in publishing. Despite the small team, 169 issues have been published to date, all of which are on the website www.occhealth.co.za. Efforts are underway to apply for international accreditation and to increase *Occupational Health Southern Africa's* footprint on the African continent.