

## About this issue ...



The best possible introduction to this new issue is, without doubt, the news that the SAJGO was recently accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training of South Africa, after careful evaluation using their strict criteria. This remarkable achievement confirms the high academic standard of the publication and peer-review and editorial

processes and consistent quality as we move into the fourth year of existence.

It will also, importantly, mean that authors of original research published in this journal will now be eligible to apply for subsidy via their academic institutions. I trust that this new status, as well as the user-friendly online submission process, will strengthen our position as the preferred journal in which to publish related research findings, position statements and other important academic output, including case reports. Upon reaching this milestone, we gratefully recognise the contributions of the publisher, the editorial board and all the willing reviewers and authors.

Human papillomavirus- (HPV) induced oncogenesis, primarily in the lower genital tract, continues to attract attention. New ways of protecting against and diagnosing infection with high-risk HPV types are being developed and are of interest. Through vaccination against and screening for HPV, these cancers can be prevented. However, these preventative measures will only be beneficial as far as they are implemented and implementable, which remains problematic.

The first research paper focuses on the knowledge among healthcare workers of HPV vaccination, and also self-reported prescription history and habits. Vaccine prescription seldom takes place, and very few patients will therefore benefit. Unidentified barriers prevent widespread implementation of this very effective and safe intervention. Government-supported population-wide vaccination will almost certainly target adolescent and younger schoolgirls, which implies that everyone now already in high school or older will be missed by a future roll-out. We should not debate the appropriate group of healthcare workers who must take responsibility for the health of the teenager. Instead, every doctor should

be aware of who these young people are (whether she seeks health care or not), and suggest and immediately prescribe HPV vaccination. That is, if the patient can potentially afford this.

In an opinion piece on alternatives to conventional cervical cytology, the focus is on immunohistochemistry (IHC) as an adjunct to cytology, rather than HPV testing. While the argument is mostly economic, one important barrier is the difficulty in using these methodologies on cytology samples. It is also doubtful whether IHC will be able to reproduce the excellent results of HPV testing in predicting disease and the absence thereof. It is clear that simple HPV testing is not the final answer in the search for the ideal screening and diagnostic test, and the introduction of different proliferation markers on cervical biopsies can certainly become very interesting in future.

SMO47, a new biomarker in women with and without adnexal disease, is compared with the currently available marker, CA125. This research report highlights the need for further study in this field and the difficulty in implementing effective ovarian screening, as well as the problems encountered with pre-histology ovarian disease diagnosis. Similarly, ovarian carcinogenesis from endometriosis is incompletely understood. Our current knowledge of the condition and its diagnosis is enhanced by the addition of molecular markers to diagnostic tests, as pointed out in the review. Such research into ovarian tumour biology contributes to the identification of women at risk for ovarian malignancy, as well as the development of enhanced screening and follow-up techniques.

The case reports for this issue deal with a true cervical carcinosarcoma, presenting as a polypoid tumour in the cervical os, and colonic metastasis from a cervical carcinoma presenting with bowel obstruction.

This first issue of Volume 4 is also the congress issue for the 35th National congress of SASOG, the South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. We acknowledge the contribution of SASOG to our running costs, and wish to serve our mother organisation and its members well. We have again published oncology-related abstracts, and wish everyone a most enjoyable and fruitful meeting in the Drakensberg!

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