

# FROM THE EDITOR



Even after five years of intensive activity by the Society, and an increase of membership from 300 to 8 600 health care professionals, I am still frequently asked what it means to be a member of the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society. Well, apart from the camaraderie of the executive committee and members, engendered by a collective effort to provide appropriate diagnosis and treatment to southern Africa's HIV-infected and affected, the obvious advantages are:

#### ■ Quarterly publications:

- The *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine*
- *Transcript* (newsletter containing regional and country branch meeting information and the latest antiretroviral (ARV) drug prices)
- Website\*: Society structure; executive committee information; latest HIV/AIDS news; locally produced guidelines; up-to-date private sector ARV prices; back issues of journals, and branch meeting information.

#### ■ Courses:

Courses are provided in collaboration with other organisations, e.g. the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD):

- HIV Management Course (3-day course)
- Refresher Course (1-day course for alumni of the HIV Management Course).

Courses are aimed at providing training for health care professionals at different levels of interest, the end-point of which would be to sit the Diploma of HIV Management, run bi-annually for the last 3 years by the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa and held in various centres throughout South Africa and selected cities in other countries. Examinations are set and marked by the Society Executive Committee (EXCO).

#### ■ Access to not-for-profit priced antiretrovirals:

Through agreements with pharmaceutical companies, paid-up members of the Society may enroll on access

programmes, e.g. Glaxo SmithKline's Global Access Programme.

#### ■ Guidelines:

Locally produced guidelines on a large variety of HIV/AIDS diagnostic, treatment and care topics are compiled by specialist guidelines committees. They are published in the Journal and updated on an on-going basis. This issue of the journal contains updated Adult ART Guidelines. Current guidelines are in the process of being loaded onto the website.

#### ■ Consultancy:

A daytime consultancy service for doctors needing specialist advice on difficult cases is provided (currently as a free service) by highly experienced members of the Society.

#### ■ Advocacy:

The EXCO takes up advocacy issues on the Society's behalf, for example access to treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis (occupational and sexual assault) and other topics, to try to improve the rendering of adequate and appropriate HIV/AIDS medical services in southern Africa. This is aimed at making medical HIV/AIDS care a more rewarding experience.

#### ■ Networking:

The Society's database (of 8 600 members) provides an efficient networking and referral tool. Health care professionals who need to refer patients to doctors in their towns/centres ring the Society offices and are provided with lists of four to five doctors who have completed an HIV management course, together with their contact details.

Recently the Society concluded a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with the International Association of Physicians in Aids Care (IAPAC) in which the two organisations broadly agreed to collaborate in the areas of expanding medical education; advocacy; and the development of appropriate training materials based on SAHCS guidelines. Included in this co-operation is an agreement that the Society will distribute *JIAPAC* (IAPAC's quarterly journal) together with the *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine* every quarter. Another reason to belong!

#### DES MARTIN

*Editor, Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine*  
*President, Southern African HIV Clinicians Society*

If you are not receiving full services from the Society, please make sure that you have provided the Database Manager with your *current* contact details by e-mailing Mr Pat Solan at: [patsolan@global.co.za](mailto:patsolan@global.co.za).

\* *Please note:* Although the Society's upgraded and fully functional website is available to members with access to the web, members who wish to continue to receive journals in hard copy, by post, will do so. Members who wish to receive *Transcript* via e-mail or post please send an e-mail to [sahivsoc@sahivsoc.org](mailto:sahivsoc@sahivsoc.org) or ring Ms Samantha Klusener at: (011) 453-5066 or fax a note to: (011) 453- 5059.