



# From the Editor . . .



**Gill Nelson,  
Editor-in-Chief**

**W**elcome to our third issue of 2017. It is hard to believe that we are almost into the second half of the year. We have deviated slightly from our usual format in this issue; two of the papers are parts of two different series. The first is Part 1 of a position paper on safety and health in mining that

we are publishing in the Journal on behalf of the Scientific Committee on Mining Occupational Safety and Health (SC MinOSH) of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH). Due to space constraints, the position paper has been divided into three parts; Parts 2 and 3 will be published in the next two issues of *Occupational Health Southern Africa*. Together, the three parts form a single paper, and should be read as such. The lead author of the paper is Kaj Elgstrand from Uppsala University in Sweden who, together with his co-authors, is an expert in this field.

David Stanton continues with his Slavery series. The first part was a commentary on Slavery from Ancient Times; this second part is an introduction to 'Gold and the North Atlantic Slave Trade', to be followed by two additional papers on this topic in following issues of the Journal and is split into three sub-parts. We will continue to publish papers from the series throughout this and next year.

Tony Davies, Professor Emeritus at Wits, and Jim Phillips continue the history theme, discussing a report published by Lambrechts in 1963, and describing why we should not accept that average dust measurements (the most common method of reporting exposure to dust) are either reflective or representative of true exposure. The importance of peak exposures, however short the duration, and their potential health effects, are raised in many discussions around occupational health (and hygiene).

The 'Society pages' are full of news again, from the 12th SASOHN Academic Day, to the many benefits of being a SAIOH member, to a detailed report from SASOM on the ICOH Midterm Meeting in Florence in March (with photographs and descriptions of Italy to make you sorry that you were not there!).

Other occupational health news of interest includes the announcement, in April, about the release of the Occupational Health and Safety Association's (OHSA) final rule on protecting workers from exposure to respirable crystalline silica. The key provisions are the reduction of the permissible exposure level (PEL) to 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup> of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift; as well as (amongst others) the requirement for employers to use engineering controls to limit exposure to the PEL, to limit high exposures, to develop exposure control plans, and to provide training about risks of exposure and how to limit exposure to silica dust.<sup>1</sup> This is OSHA's first updated regulation for silica since 1971, and it is estimated that more than 600 lives will be saved and more than 900 cases of silicosis will be prevented, annually.

Last, I am pleased to inform you that *Occupational Health Southern Africa* is now on the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) website list of journals following the ICMJE Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals.<sup>2,3</sup>



## REFERENCES

1. OSHA's Final Rule to Protect Workers from Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica. Washington; 2017. Available at: <https://www.osha.gov/silica/> (accessed 18 May 2017)
2. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Recommendations, updated December 2016. 2017. Available at: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/> (accessed 18 May 2017)
3. Journals Following the ICMJE Recommendations. 2017. Available at: <http://www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations/> (accessed 18 May 2017)