



From the Editor . . .



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

Occupational Health Southern Africa is moving towards having more scientific content, and you will have noticed the abundance of research papers in our previous issue. Nevertheless, rest assured that we have no intention to stop publishing reports, and other news and

announcements that are relevant to occupational health. In this issue, we have two workshop reports: one on the Gender, Health and World of Work Programme, and the other on a Construction and Health workshop, both facilitated by the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH). Jim teWaterNaudé has written a review on a book about asbestos mining, by Piet van Zyl.

The scientific content in this issue includes an original research paper on distortion product otoacoustic emissions by Meshack Moepeng and his colleagues at the University of Pretoria. Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) remains on the health agendas of the Departments of Health, Labour and Mineral Resources. There is much work still to be done before we see a reduction in NIHL rates in the industries at risk, such as mining. The problem is not restricted to South Africa; the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates that there are 10 million people in the US with NIHL (see <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/stats.html> for more). Penny Reimers, from the University of KwaZulu-Natal has written an informative paper on breastfeeding in the workplace, with many recommendations for assisting working women, both prior to and after giving birth. You will also be able to read the third and final part in the series on safety and health in mining by Kaj Elgstrand et al., which concentrates on informal mining, including its effects on communities, and the roles of women and children in unregulated mining activities.

An exciting development for both those of us behind the scenes and our potential authors, is the introduction of Scholastica. This is an electronic platform that will

assist us to streamline the submissions and peer review processes at *Occupational Health Southern Africa*. I am aware that many of you are frustrated by the long delays from submission to publication, which we hope will be substantially reduced with our move to Scholastica. Scholastica Peer Review is a central online editorial management platform, used by a host of academic journals from a wide variety of disciplines, and promises to automate and track the peer review process, streamlining communications between authors, editors and reviewers. For example, automated messages will notify authors about the status of their manuscripts with regard to the peer review process, and all communications pertaining to a manuscript will be accessible. The editors will be able to identify bottlenecks in the peer review process, facilitating easier and quicker management of manuscripts.



Scholastica Peer Review online editorial management system

Scholastica has similar features to ScholarOne and Manuscript Central, for those of you who have used these platforms to submit papers to other journals that use them.

Scholastica will be linked to our website shortly.

Finally, please remember that all papers are freely available (open access) on the website six months after publishing. On behalf of the editorial and publishing teams, I wish all of you who are writing exams the best of luck.