



## From the Editor . . .



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

The issue of well-being, both physical and mental, is high on the agendas of companies and individuals. Many of the bigger companies have wellness programmes, and we are encouraged through the media (social media included), our medical insurers, and our employers, to maintain a healthy lifestyle to avoid both communicable and non-communicable diseases. While programmes are implemented, there is not much monitoring or reporting of the outcomes. Elizabeth Joseph-Shehu conducted a literature review of the measurement of healthy lifestyle practices, concentrating on a particular tool that is commonly used – the health-promoting lifestyle profile (HPLP). Together with BP Ncama, she identified only 23 relevant studies from a potential 3 476, and summarised the findings.

Angela Butkovic, a previous Editorial Board member of *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, has written a back-to-basics paper on vision screening assessments in the workplace. While we are all aware that pilots and those who operate vehicles need to have good vision, we forget that many workers in other types of jobs also need to have keen eyesight to conduct their tasks correctly and efficiently. Most jobs require one to read – from operating instructions on machinery and devices, to warnings on hazardous chemicals. While literacy skills might be tested to ensure that workers can read, and audiometric examinations are conducted annually in most companies, testing for visual acuity as part of the occupational health examination (or wellness programme) is often overlooked, with potentially disastrous consequences.

Travel medicine might not, at first, appear to be related to occupational health, but Lynn Botha and her colleagues have looked at this from the angle of employees travelling for work reasons – within Africa and beyond the continent – with a view to including travel medicine in the occupational health nursing curricula. They had overwhelming support for this from their study participants.

Next year, the 7th International Conference on the History

of Occupational and Environmental Health will be held in Durban, hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Please support UKZN by submitting abstracts for presentations, or just attending the event. The deadline for abstracts is 30 October 2019; early bird registration will close on 15 January 2020, and regular registration closes on 30 March 2020. We are planning a special issue towards the end of 2020 to coincide with the Conference, so please send us any contributions, insights, and descriptions of your experiences, especially those of you who have been occupational health practitioners for several decades.

As always, we have interesting news from SASOHN, SASOM and SAIOH. The MMPA is a much smaller organisation in terms of member numbers, and needs the assistance of its members to send news, and even write reports of relevant events that they have attended. Please communicate your ideas and contributions to Mbale Buthelezi, the secretary of the Mines Professional Association Secretariat (MPAS).

Last but not least, I would like to thank our current major sponsors. PathCare, Rand Mutual Assurance (RMA), and NEPAD are providing not only sponsorship for *Occupational Health Southern Africa* but also interesting and informative articles.

We are concentrating on publishing scientific content in *Occupational Health Southern Africa* – original research, back-to-basics papers, case reports, etc. However, we are aware that many of our readers enjoy the reports, news and other non-scientific items, so we will be upgrading the website ([www.occhealth.co.za](http://www.occhealth.co.za)) in an attempt to give you the best of both worlds. Our new online features will include legislation updates pertinent to occupational health, additional photographs from events such as congresses and workshops, and reports that cannot be included in the print version of the Journal because of space constraints. We rely on you to continue sending us relevant information for the website. Anything that you would like to share with your occupational health colleagues is welcome. Please send any feedback on the website to Kevin Beaumont ([kevin@mettamedia.co.za](mailto:kevin@mettamedia.co.za)).

I will be on sabbatical leave in London until early October, but will be dedicating much of my time to developing the Journal, chasing reviewers, and ensuring that we publish high-quality papers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kevin Beaumont'.