

Editorial

Four decades of the Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics and milestones

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The Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics (SJP) will complete its fourth decade this year and step into the fifth decade in 2018. With some sense of enjoyment and achievement it might be pertinent to give a short account of the progress made and the milestones which have been accomplished, aspiring for further goals that are yet to be achieved.

The Cover of the current issue of SJP highlights the covers of three founder publications depicted amongst the pyramids of the Kushite rulers of Meroe, the Southern Capital of the Napta/Meroitic Kingdom (800BC-350AD) [1], to reflect on their value within the domain of Sudan civilization. The first of these is the Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of Child Health held by the Sudan Association of Paediatricians (SAP) in Port Sudan (15th–16th February 1975) [2]. It was printed by Khartoum University Press and published as one of the Sudan Medical Association Congress Series in 1977. The motto of the congress was “MATERNITY AND CHILD CARE IS THE BASIS OF PROSPERITY OF NATIONS” [2]. This publication is considered to be the womb from which SJP has emerged. The Editors were Prof Mahmoud Mohamed Hassan, First President of SAP [3]; Prof El Daw Mukhtar, Ex-Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Khartoum (U of K); Prof Mohamed Ibrahim A Omer, Ex-President of SAP [4]; Prof Zain A Karrar, President of the Sudan Medical Council, Ex-President of SAP [5]; and Prof Gaafar Ibnauf Suliman, Ex-President of SAP, and Founder of Gaafar Ibnauf Children’s Hospital, one of the pioneering children’s hospitals in Africa and Arab countries [6].

The second highlighted cover is the first official publication of SJP in 1977. This came as a supplement which covered a symposium on perinatology, arranged to inaugurate the local postgraduate training in

paediatrics leading to the U of K Master in Paediatrics and Child Health (MPCH, later renamed Clinical MD in Paediatrics and Child Health). The symposium was attended by Professor F S W Brimblecombe (1919–1992) who first came to Sudan with his family (1968–69) as WHO Professor of Child Health in the U of K, and established the first Department of Paediatrics and Child Health (DPCH) in the university [7,8]. Both current Editors of SJP (MOS and MAMS) were among this first batch of the MPCH students and still vividly remember this symposium. The Editors of this SJP supplement were Prof Mohamed Ibrahim A Omer [4], Prof Zain A Karrar [5], and Prof Robert L Broadhead who worked at the U of K Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, with remarkable contributions to teaching of both undergraduates and students of the MPCH. Later, he left to Malawi where he was instrumental in establishing a medical school for Malawi, rising to the status of Principal [9].

The third highlighted cover is the second official publication of SJP in 1977, and was looked after by the same Editors of the 1977 SJP Supplement. It addressed some of the major challenges facing child health in Sudan including community approach in delivery of health services in rural areas [10], paediatric emergency admissions in relation to malnutrition [11], neonatal problems in Khartoum [12], and tetanus neonatorum [13].

In 1984 (Volume 3 issue of SJP), an ISSN number was obtained (ISSN 0256-4408), thanks to the guidance of Prof Ahmed Al safi, Executive Director, Sudan Medical Heritage Foundation, who has then been the Editor-in-Chief of Sudan Medical Journal [14]. The Editor-in-Chief of this issue was Prof Mohamed Ibrahim A Omer [4], and one of us (MAMS) was appointed Editor. The

Editor (MAMS) has been involved in a joint research project on childhood bacterial meningitis [15] as part of a link program between the U of K and Uppsala University [16], supported by the Swedish Commission for Technical Co-operation and the Medical Research Council. During one of his visits to Uppsala he compiled this issue, thanks to the typesetting of Iva Kulhanek and the support of Professor Yngve Hofvander, Head of the International Child Health Unit, Department of Pediatrics at Uppsala University. This issue was printed by Khartoum University Press and an Arabic script of the “*Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics*” was added

to the Cover to reflect the main language and culture following the migratory waves from the Arabian Peninsula to Sudan in the 12th century. The script was designed at the College of Fine and Applied Arts, Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUST), by Taha El Atta, PhD [17], and the art work for the same issue was performed by Professor Abdo Osman [18]. Since the available typesetting technology at that time did not allow for *italic* words (Figure 1), these had to be typed first on a sticker paper, cut by a scalpel and mounted in the appropriate places by the Editor (MAMS).

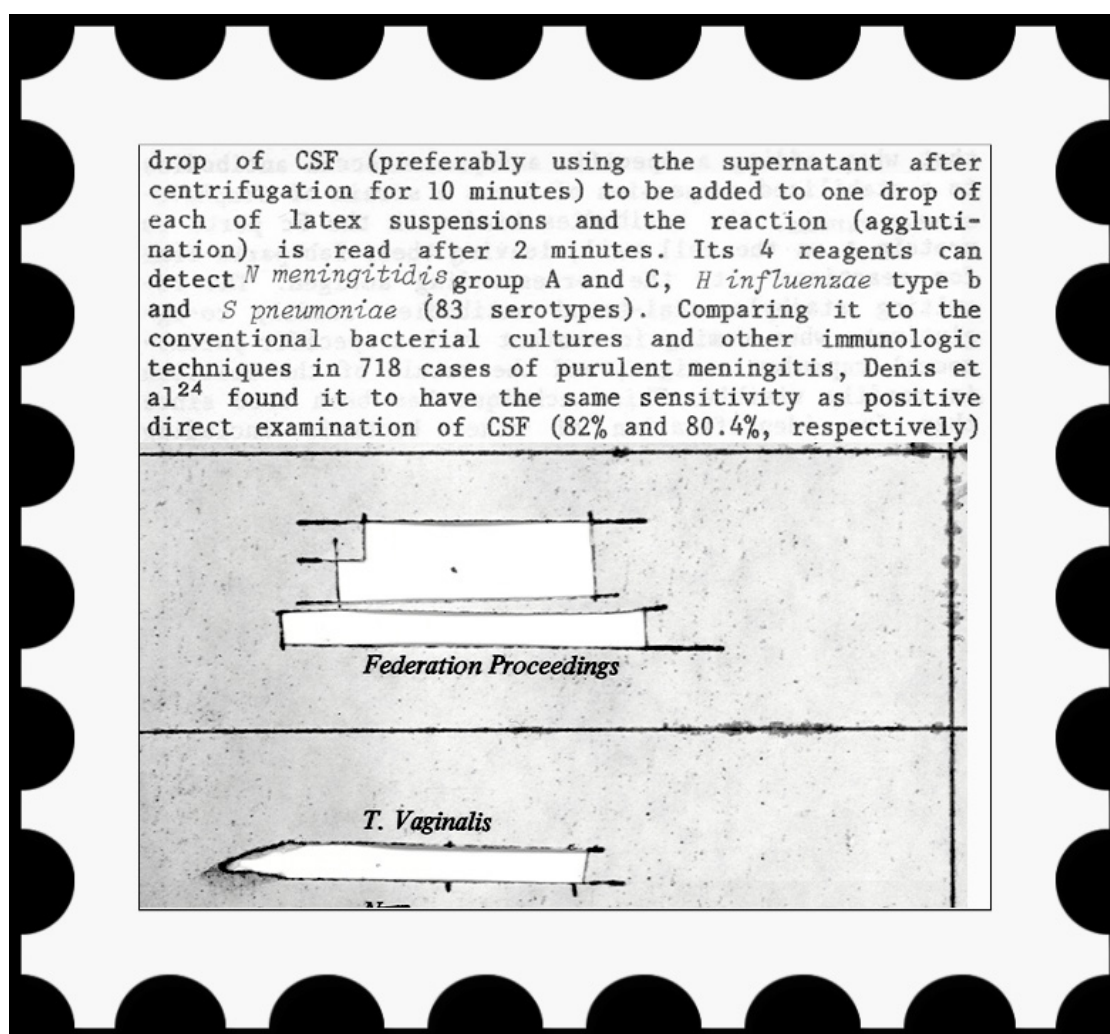


Figure 1 - The available typesetting technology in 1984 did not allow for *italic* words, and these had to be typed first on a sticker paper (below), cut by a scalpel and mounted in the appropriate places (above, reproduced from (Reference [15]) by the Editor of *Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics*.

Meetings were regularly arranged by SAP Executive Committee to discuss and suggest improvements in the layout of SJP. The resulting documents were

reproduced for distribution by stencil duplication using a Roneo machine (Figure 2).

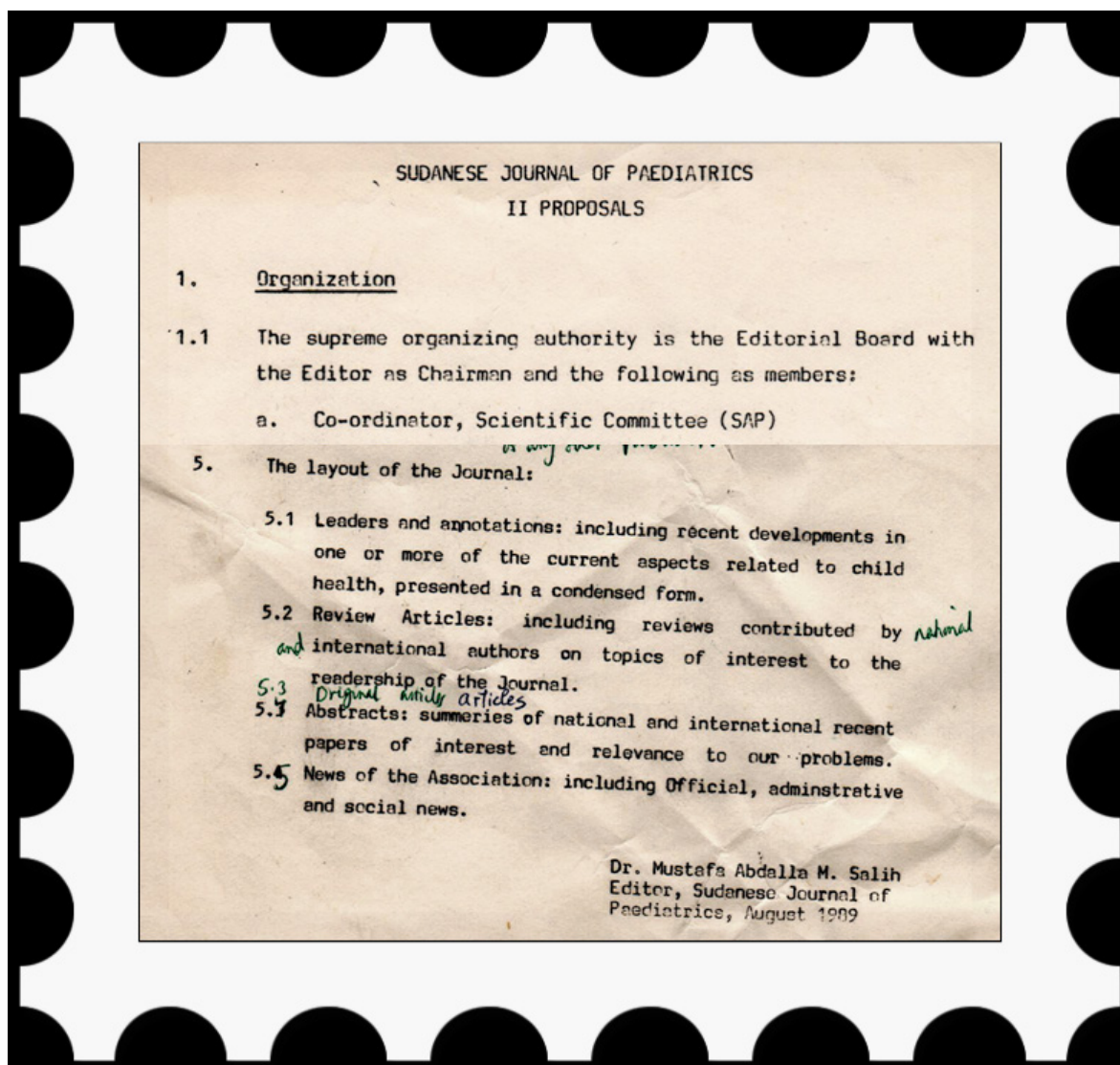


Figure 2 – One of the meeting documents (reproduced for distribution by stencil duplication using a Roneo machine) of Sudan Association of Padiatricians (SAP) Executive Committee to discuss and suggest improvements in the layout of *Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics*.

The following era of SJP was admirably looked after by Prof Ali Babiker Habour, Ex-Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Gezira (U of G) [19], who became Editor and facilitated printing SJP by the University of Gezira Printing and Publishing House, Wad Medani. The Editorial Board included two Assistant Editors for the first time. One of them (Prof Haydar El Hadi Babikir, Consultant Pediatrician/Pediatric Neurologist and Dean, Faculty of Medicine, U of G) designed the cover of an SJP issue (Volume 9, 2009) [20] together

with his daughter Dr Nazik Al-Malaika, who is a graduate of the Faculty of Medicine, U of G.

In 2010 one of us (MAMS) was invited by Prof Mohamed Ahmed Abdullah, President of SAP to become the International Editor of SJP. Thanks to the dedicated support of SAP President, SJP witnessed the cyber era in 2011 through its website: <http://www.sudanjp.org/> [21]. Dr Satti Abdulrahim Satti (current President of SAP and Dean Faculty of Medicine, AlMughtaribeen University, Khartoum State, Sudan)

joined as Editorial Office Director, and later on as Editor until 2013. Adnan Mahmood Usmani became Coordinating Editor of SJP with commendable impact [22]. The cover of SJP was modified to capture the old civilizations of Sudan and included the Meroitic script, the indigenous alphabet consisting of 23 letters, which has been developed in the Napatan Period at about 700-300BC and was used to write the Meroitic language of the Kingdom of Meroë in Sudan [23]. In 2012 one of us (MOS) joined as Editor of SJP, and became Editor-in-Chief in 2014. Also in 2012, two Assistant International Editors (Prof Sarar Hamza Mohamed and Dr Amir M I Babiker) joined the Editorial Board with significant impact on the editing and production of SJP. Credit for the valuable contribution in scanning, typesetting and graphical

designing of the journal goes to Mr Sayed Shalabi, Ms Fareeha Jabeen, Mr Vir Salvador and Ms Loida M Sese [24].

Another horizon and breakthrough for SJP was in the year 2016 which witnessed the acceptance for inclusion by PubMed Central (PMC), sponsored by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) [25]. Articles archived in PMC are indexed in PubMed, with more than 22 million biomedical literature citations in its database. This indexing of SJP in PubMed confirmed its prestige in providing an international platform for pediatrics and child health, but meant sustained efforts to publish biomedical research of high caliber that will shine worldwide [26]. Credit for this will go to the authors, reviewers and members of the Editorial Board of *Sudanese Journal of Paediatrics*.

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