

# TREATING INFANTS AND CHILDREN



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A global estimate indicates that for 20% of all children there will be some concern with regard to their development or neurological status during their childhood. In at least 10% of cases the condition will have significant implications for their general well-being, development and future. It is therefore imperative that every professional who has to manage, mind, treat, teach or rehabilitate infants, children and adolescents be acutely aware of the relevant developmental and neurological issues.

The formation of the Paediatric Neurology and Developmental Association of Southern Africa (PANDA-SA), inaugurated in 1996, has helped to emphasise the importance of neurodevelopmental issues in infants and children, e.g. through workshops, newsletters and conferences.

In this edition of *CME* we cover a wide variety of neurological and developmental topics. Some of them re-visit common conditions general practitioners have to manage, such as soiling difficulties (encopresis) and enuresis. We also cover current and controversial topics such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder in children. It is important to include epilepsy and epileptic syndromes in children in this edition, as these conditions are very prevalent and require management at all levels of care.

I have also considered it prudent to revisit two topics that have been 'neglected' in the face of more exotic or pervasive conditions, where early diagnosis and referral for management is crucial, namely children with language delay and cerebral palsy. Slightly more esoteric, but nonetheless very common, is the problem of hypotonia in infants and children. There is a very good review of this rather difficult topic.

I trust that all health professionals who are passionate about children, their development and their health will find this edition of *CME* useful, and I also hope that it will make everyone aware of the importance of early diagnosis of developmental and neurological difficulties and the appropriate management to ensure a successful future for our children.

'One hundred years from now it will not matter what you had to go through in life, what sacrifices you had to make, what car you drove, or house you lived in. But the world may be a better place because you were important in the life of a child.' — Margaret Powers