



Editorial

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A highlight and important milestone for the Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS) in 2023 was the 3rd Biennial PATS Congress hosted by the Respiratory Society of Kenya on 7–10 June in Mombasa, Kenya. The theme of the congress, “The African Environment and Lung Health”, was well represented in the program by over 100 delegates from all corners of the world, including 13 African countries. In this issue, Kagima *et al.* succinctly summarize and highlight key themes that emerged at the congress that impact lung health in Africa, including climate change, air pollution, social deprivation, early life events, and respiratory infections.^[1] The lack of regulation of tobacco and nicotine products in Africa, including e-cigarettes, was identified as an ever-present threat to the youth in Africa, who are susceptible to marketing strategies to promote these additive products. The PATS and the *Journal* have a duty and responsibility to support and implement the position statement of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies, which seeks to protect vulnerable populations in Africa, especially our youth, from the harmful effects of tobacco and related products. The PATS Congress achieved this objective with flying colors!^[2]

The irony and dilemma of the carbon footprint left by organizing medical congresses and meetings that promote lung health in the face of climate change threats is highlighted by Bagha *et al.* in this issue.^[3] In this study, the flight-carbon footprint of 80 delegates and researchers attending the PATS Methods in Epidemiological, Clinical, and Organizational Research 2023 course was estimated to be 57 tons of CO₂. Although this footprint is small in comparison to larger medical conferences, it does raise the intriguing question of how we think about the environmental impact of organizing medical congresses and courses that require air travel for in-person gatherings. There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it rapid technological advancements to facilitate remote communication and meetings. However, how many of us emerged from the pandemic with a greater appreciation for the benefit of human contact and face-to-face communication? It's an interesting and complex dilemma for us as advocates who promote lung health and a cleaner environment. Perhaps, as done by Bagha *et al.* and suggested by others, all medical conference planners should include practical ways to mitigate the carbon footprint of our gatherings and actively plan green and sustainable conferences.^{?[3,4]}

As highlighted by the past editor-in-chief, Dr Obianuju Ozoh, in her editorial reflections, the Journal of PATS (JPATS) has passed a significant “birthing” milestone, and we have now entered the “running” stage of the Journal's developmental journey.^[5] Taking over this responsibility has been a great honor and pleasure, but with this responsibility comes numerous challenges, including attracting high-quality and relevant contributions to carry the Journal over the finishing line in terms of desired accreditation status and rankings. The world of medical journals has exploded, and competition is tough, but I am confident with contributions such as those

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published in the current issue covering diverse subjects such as point-of-care lung ultrasound and pulmonary function in sickle cell disease, we are well on our way to achieving these objectives.^[6,7]

Diversification of content to reach a wider readership and audience is one of my goals for the future direction of the Journal. With this in mind, I would like to welcome Dr. Ivan Shewitz to the editorial board of JPATS. Dr. Shewitz is a cardiothoracic surgeon and an active member of the PATS executive committee. We welcome you, Ivan, and look forward to receiving contributions from our surgical colleagues who share a common goal of advancing lung and thoracic health in Africa.

Sincerely,
Associate Professor Marco Zampoli,
Editor-in-Chief.

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