



Editorial

An enduring commitment to respiratory research

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This issue marks a year of uninterrupted and timely publication of the Journal of the Pan African Thoracic Society (JPATS), and I wish to congratulate the Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS) for this accomplishment. As the umbrella and leading respiratory society in Africa, JPATS has further strengthened PATS goal of helping Africa breathe. On behalf of the editorial team, we wish to thank the reviewers and authors, without whom we could not have achieved this. We also thank the British Thoracic Society for partnering with us to ensure we stay on our feet as we develop our muscles to stand on our own.

JPATS set out, first, to provide a platform for African researchers to reach the global audience through low-cost open-access publication in a specialty journal. Second, it aimed to publish respiratory-related research from the global community that focus on low- and middle-income countries or could be applicable to these regions. An appraisal of previous and current issues demonstrates that grounded on scientific merit, JPATS is well on the path to achieving these objectives. Further, it has reduced the barrier sometimes encountered by authors due to limited interest in African-related research without regard to scientific merit.

This current issue of JPATS continues on this mandate with very interesting and relevant papers. The review on lung cancer in the West African subregion by Okonta *et al.* highlights the scarcity of good quality data from the subregion.^[1] It also identified low level of awareness about warning signs of lung cancer among health practitioners and limited access to diagnostic and treatment facilities as impediments to favorable outcomes.^[1] Kagima *et al.*^[2] used a qualitative research design to deeply investigate the enablers and challenges to the use of point of care ultrasound (PoCUS) for the assessment of patients with breathlessness among key stakeholders at a tertiary care hospital in Kenya. A striking finding was that despite the recognition of the potential value of PoCUS in clinical care, reduced self-efficacy due to lack of training, hospital norms, high workload, power dynamics, and lack of policy comprised hindrances to implementation. These findings align with the theory of planned behavior that recognizes that the intention to change behavior goes beyond favorable attitude but includes perceived behavioral control and subjective norms.^[3] It, therefore, underpins the broad-based recommendation made by the authors to improve the acceptability and use of this potentially cost-effective investigation that has been shown to improve outcome in a low-income setting where access to other modalities of evaluation may not be easily accessible or may be lacking.^[4]

The study by Adeniyi *et al.*, with its accompanying editorial by Ayuk and Nwosu, brings to the fore the need for training for healthcare workers on the safe use of oxygen and the development of local guidelines to inform practice.^[5,6] The value of oxygen as a life saver is well known but the current coronavirus-2019 pandemic has underscored this. These papers bring to the fore training needs on the appropriate use of oxygen for maximized efficacy, prevention of potential harm, and reduction

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in wastage which is a priority in many African settings where scarcity is a perennial challenge. The case report by Owusu *et al.* is very interesting and extends the evidence that cystic fibrosis affects persons of African descent and in these cases children from Ghana.^[7] The report highlights the challenges encountered by the authors in confirming the diagnosis which could question previous beliefs regarding the rarity of cystic fibrosis in persons of African descent. It suggests that low index of suspicion and lack of facilities for screening may have limited diagnosis of cystic fibrosis, particularly in some cases of unexplained chronic lung disease in African children, adolescents, and young adults.

To conclude, JPATS is enduring and we take this opportunity to assure our contributors of our commitment to further enhance our impact and relevance in the future. The vision of JPATS to be the leading voice in African respiratory-related research drives the editorial team to ensure we publish only high-quality research that informs policy, promotes health care, and drives global discourse.

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