

The South African Society of Anaesthesiologists initiative to support research development

Bruce Biccard

Editor-in-Chief

Email: Biccardb@ukzn.ac.za

Research requires protected research time, but this time requires money. In this edition of SAJAA, the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA) is launching a substantial doctoral grant to support the development of tomorrow's leading researchers within the field of anaesthesiology in South Africa. This is an important contribution from SASA as grant funding improves research productivity.¹⁻³

Current doctoral grants on offer in South Africa do not adequately address the need for financial support to allow for dedicated research time in a clinical work environment without a substantial loss of income. The compromise many South African clinical researchers make is to continue to try and conduct clinical research despite a substantial clinical work load. This strategy is flawed. A large clinical work load decreases research output.⁴ In reality to increase research productivity, clinicians require protected research time.²⁻⁵ The SASA's grant call is based on the premise that this grant will provide the necessary financial support needed to establish protected research time within a clinical environment in order to complete important doctoral studies.

We are confident that a successful applicant will go on to become a major research leader both in South Africa and internationally as the potential candidate will have been selected according to a number of criteria known to be associated with research productivity. This grant will provide the financial support necessary to create an environment for effective clinical research and doctoral studies of which we currently have a shortage in South Africa.

It is important to nurture South African researchers who can develop a South African research agenda. This is needed as the published literature reflect predominantly European and North American patients who are different to South African patients. We need to focus research on what is ultimately relevant to our patients. South Africa has a lower Human Development Index and

different population morbidity patterns when compared to European and North American patients. South Africa has the unenviable task of addressing four simultaneous major epidemics: i) poverty-related diseases; ii) non-communicable diseases; iii) human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and related diseases; and, iv) injury and violence.⁶

We would encourage interested researchers to apply if their research aspirations are in line with this grant call. This is indeed a unique opportunity to provide the financial support to allow meaningful protected research time in a clinical speciality to allow an individual to work towards a doctorate. It is hoped that the successful candidate will develop into a mentor for future researchers which will go some way to addressing the limited number of clinical researchers in perioperative medicine in South Africa.⁷

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