

A roundabout approach to progress

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WG Evans



A circle is a round straight line with a hole in the middle.

This is the last issue of the Journal for 2019.. and that convoluted definition of a circle, devised by Mark Twain, may have some application.

Two of the articles appearing in the issue consider the National Health Insurance Scheme. In particular the Association has responded to the invitation of the Portfolio Committee on Health to submit comment on the proposed NHI Bill. The Communique from Head Office considers some of the principles.

The 40 page Submission Document deals comprehensively with all sections and provisions. It is a genuine endeavour to find the straight lines amongst some of the rather circuitous clauses. The circle itself is completed when we affirm at the outset our commitment to the WHO statement that "health is a basic human right and supports all efforts to promote optimal health" and we then add "including oral health in South Africa".

Amongst the concluding remarks appear these words "SADA remains supportive of government and opportunities to work together to reform the Healthcare system in a manner that will result in improved access to quality affordable care for all South Africans".

Our commitment is plain. Perhaps some of the Bill is not so plain for between our two statements in the document commenting on the Bill are the Association enquiries and the responses and the constructive thoughts ...and the criticisms and the advice... all encircling the hole in the middle, which readily is seen to represent the Fund... at present closer to a hole than a solid centre!

A rare Letter to the Editor focusses on the need to work in unison to overcome perceived problems posed by the NHI scheme. Yes, we need to hold hands to complete the circle.

But Mark Twain was not the only author to suggest definitions of a circle. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus recommended that we survey a circle in this way... "On a circle, an end point can also be a beginning point." If we look at it in the way Roger von Oech* interpreted the slogan, then every problem may be an opportunity for the creative thinker. That philosophy would certainly hold for the NHI... but may also apply to another dilemma facing the profession... Denturism.



Vitruvian man.

Another intriguing example of circles in life... Leonardo da Vinci proved the theory of Vitruvius, the Roman Architect, that a man with outstretched arms and legs described a perfect circle with the centre at his navel!

Image Source: Luc Viatour (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Positive approaches are recommended in the "brief review" appearing this month which offers thoughts on how best this opportunity may be grasped to enhance service to the community.

Two other papers identify end points, problems, stumbling blocks... one considers partial denture design, the other a method of monitoring growth... but both arrive at end points... and then suggest new applications, teaching and practice which will continue the circle. Thus advances dental acumen and skill.

Anish Kapoor** penned this advice "The work itself has a complete circle of meaning and counterpoint ...but without your involvement there is no story." How apt for any Journal ...for a complex and numerous panel of colleagues are involved in the production of every issue... but the most important remain the readers.

It bears repeating... without your involvement there is no story. So the clinically oriented papers on Ortho-

dontic success with an innovative appliance and the equal success in testing recovery and healing in Periodontic cases are open to your critical appraisal.

“Windows” has identified an intriguing paper which pursues and advocates the omission of linings in restorative dentistry. For one who was rigidly schooled in the importance of protecting the pulp with a lining (which had to be perfectly rectangular and level!), this is a contradiction of note, **but** refer again to Mark Twain... take the (slightly) curved line to stay on the straight path to full circle enhanced Dentistry!

*The author of “Expect the Unexpected” and founder of “Creative Think”.

**An Indian sculptor living in London.

