



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN HEALTH

The Undergraduate Research in Health Journal (URHJ) is a new initiative designed to foster scholarly engagement and professional development among undergraduate health sciences students. In the health sciences arena, providing undergraduates with other opportunities to develop research skills and disseminate their findings through publication is invaluable. URHJ serves as a platform for these students to share their research, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in health sciences. The biannual journal also fosters collaboration between undergraduate students and academics in the production of scholarly articles and is hosted on the South African Medical Association (SAMA) publishing platform.

PUBLICATION

- 3 issues
- 16 student-authored publications
- 2 editorials



The journal's first issue was published in March 2023, and to date, sixteen manuscripts have been featured across three issues. All five African consortium members have contributed one or more manuscripts. These publications cover a wide array of topics, including dentistry, forensic science, health professions education, maternal health, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, public health, student health and wellness, and surgery.

There has also been a growing representation of African health training institutions, with contributions from both current undergraduate students and recent graduates. The editorials are authored by established academics and researchers, one of which explored the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in research, serving as the inspiration for the AI-generated cover for that issue.

The journal's fourth issue is scheduled for publication in September 2024.



In collaboration with:

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Dirisana+

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More Information

<https://samajournals.co.za/index.php/urhj/index>

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TRAINING

A workshop toolkit was collaboratively developed, and a series of nine scientific writing workshops were held between February and May 2024 with nearly all African consortium member institutions. These workshops aimed to demystify the standard manuscript structure, set expectations, address common errors, and explain the publication process. In April 2024, two additional online workshops, led by an international expert, were hosted for board members, reviewers, and potential student authors. A total of 41 undergraduate students and 17 junior academic staff participated, with feedback indicating that the workshop content was highly relevant and useful.

In August 2024, the journal launched a student peer review project in collaboration with Education for Health, a peer-reviewed, MEDLINE-indexed journal of The Network: Towards Unity for Health (TUFH), a global consortium focused on health workforce education. As part of this initiative, interested editorial board members from both journals will be paired with students. Each pair will conduct independent reviews, then come together to discuss their reviews, the decision-making process, and the intricacies of peer review. This project aims to enhance students' understanding of scholarly review while fostering mentorship and professional growth.





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RESEARCH

A mixed-method research study (ethical approval number EBIT/266/2021) was conducted, but the findings were limited due to a low response rate. The study will be revisited after the publication of several more issues to obtain more robust data. Additionally, a short article has been submitted to Medical Education and is currently awaiting feedback.

SUBMISSION STATISTICS

- Days to first editorial decision: 37
- Minimum 2 peer reviewers assigned to each submission
- Days to acceptance: 160
- Days to rejection: 44
- Acceptance rate: 50%

URHJ is dedicated to the publication of high-quality undergraduate health sciences student research. The journal welcomes academic articles from all institutions who train health sciences or health professional students in Africa and beyond.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

SUBMISSIONS OPEN BI-ANNUALLY FOR

- Research papers
- Scientific letters
- Short communications
- Short reports
- Review papers

Keep an eye on the SAMA platform for future calls!

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL



ELIZABETH NIILONGA

4th year medical student
University of Namibia

“An opportunity like this gave undergraduates a chance in understanding what research is really about, encouraging me to be able to pick up gaps in knowledge in health related matters.”



IMPACT AND VISIBILITY

The journal has gained significant visibility through its feature on Dirisana+'s marketing platforms, where it has received some of the highest engagement in terms of views and likes. Additionally, editorial board members have actively promoted the journal within their academic institutions, targeting undergraduate research societies, academic networks, and professional groups. For instance, the journal has been highlighted in the College of Public Health Medicine (South Africa) newsletter, further expanding its reach and impact within the academic and professional community.

Despite the research study not being able to demonstrate a direct impact, data from the publishing platform indicates that between March 1, 2023, and September 1, 2024, the journal (cover, abstract, contents, and manuscripts) received 2,844 abstract views and 3,177 file views. Additionally, the increasing number of submissions, interest from health sciences institutions outside the consortium, support from academic health professionals for peer review, global viewership, and, most importantly, student engagement through workshops and mentoring opportunities, strongly suggest that the journal is fulfilling an important need.

The following map indicates global site visits for the URJH and the various articles:

