A number of topics which need attention in nursing in South Africa are highlighted in this issue of CURATIONIS. One is confronted by two aspects in particular — professionalism and research.

More research is needed to ensure continued development of the nursing profession. Research must however always be seen as a means to an end — the ultimate purpose is to improve the quality of nursing care. Researchers therefore have the responsibility to address important problems and to ensure the utility of their findings and conclusions. In return the profession must support it's research by defining problems and using research results in practice. Nurse educators and administrators have an important role in this regard. They should encourage enquiry and scientifically validated innovation among their students and staff. The profession must also, through its professional organisation, provide leadership for research. This can be achieved by publishing research and encouraging communication among researchers and between researchers and practitioners e.g. through workshops, seminars and conferences.

This year may prove to be a milestone for South African Nursing Research. In this issue there is an article which takes a look at past research in this country and provides suggestions for its future growth. A new regular feature, consisting of summaries of nursing research undertaken at South African Universities starts in this issue. The purpose is to keep the profession informed of research findings and recommendations available for evaluation and possible use in practice.

Furthermore, an event which is probably of historical significance for nursing research in South Africa is taking place this year. Heads of university departments of nursing, some of their staff and Chief Nursing Officers are meeting for a two-day workshop to formulate future nursing research priorities and strategies. Through this event our nursing leaders will not only promote professional development but are also accepting the challenge of accountability to meet the needs of society.