

Editorial Expression of Concern for the Guideline ‘Southern African HIV Clinicians Society gender-affirming healthcare guideline for South Africa’

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On 28 September 2021, the *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine* published the condensed guideline ‘Southern African HIV Clinicians Society gender-affirming healthcare guideline for South Africa’ by Tomson et al.¹

This Editorial Expression of Concern is issued to ensure transparency regarding aspects of the editorial and publication process identified following post-publication review.

Editorial and peer review process

Following review of the publication record, the Editor-in-Chief determined that the article did not undergo the Journal’s standard journal-led external peer-review process. Instead, the guideline underwent a pre-submission peer-review process conducted within the underlying guideline development framework, followed by review and acceptance by the Editor-in-Chief at the time before publication.

This pathway differed from the Journal’s standard external peer-review procedures in place at the time.

To ensure transparency of the publication record, the Journal will update the article to clarify the peer-review pathway and disclosure of article processing charges.

Relationship to related guideline documents

The published article was a condensed version of a guideline developed by the Gender-Affirming Healthcare Guideline Development Committee for the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society. The expanded version of the guideline titled ‘Southern African HIV Clinicians Society Gender-Affirming Healthcare Guideline for South Africa – Expanded Version: October 2021’,² was hosted by the Society and forms part of the Society’s documentation, not the Journal’s published record.

Editorial status of the article

This Editorial Expression of Concern relates solely to matters of editorial process and publication-record transparency. It does not raise concerns regarding the integrity of the guideline’s clinical recommendations.

Since its publication in 2021, further developments in clinical practice, evidence, and policy have occurred. Clinical guidance evolves over time, and readers are advised to consult current guidance issued by the relevant professional or regulatory bodies when applying recommendations in practice.

This notice does not constitute a retrospective assessment of the scientific validity of the guideline at the time of publication.

The authors have been notified of this Editorial Expression of Concern.

Note: DOI of original article published: <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhivmed.v22i1.1299>

Status of this notice

Based on the information currently available, the Journal does not anticipate further editorial action in relation to the procedural matters described in this notice.

Citation and use

This Editorial Expression of Concern forms part of the permanent scholarly record and is bidirectionally linked to the published guideline.

Readers should interpret the article¹ in light of the procedural matters described in this notice and, where relevant, consult

current, independently reviewed guidance when applying clinical or policy recommendations.

Readers citing or relying on the article¹ are advised to acknowledge that it is subject to an Editorial Expression of Concern and to cite both the original article and this notice.

References

1. Tomson A, McLachlan C, Wattrus C, et al. Southern African HIV Clinicians' Society gender-affirming healthcare guideline for South Africa. *South Afr J HIV Med.* 2021;22(1):a1299. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhivmed.v22i1.1299>
2. SAHCS Guidelines: Southern African HIV Clinicians Society gender-affirming healthcare guideline for South Africa – Expanded [homepage on the Internet]. 2021 [cited 2026 Feb 19]. Available from: <https://sahivsoc.org/Subheader/Index/sahcs-guidelines>