

## **ABSTRACT**

A commentary is presented on the urgent need for a comprehensive effort to improve the practice of pediatric therapeutics in Africa. A call for action is addressed to a variety of practitioners internationally, many of whom possess skills that could be fruitfully applied to the improvement of health outcomes for African children. Successful engagement with the many challenges requires the complementary effort of researchers in basic and clinical pharmacology and toxicology, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, clinical pharmacologists, clinical pharmacists, and political leaders and civil servants. While a comprehensive or systematic review of the relevant literature has not been attempted, the authors have highlighted promising initiatives driven by international agencies and academic networks. Two African perspectives are presented to reinforce the prospect of child health gains that can be achieved through consistent pursuit of optimal therapy for conditions such as respiratory infection, diarrhea, malaria, and HIV/AIDS. There is an imperative for development of north-south and south-south partnerships that will amplify current research efforts and mobilize existing knowledge concerning pediatric drugs. The overall goal is a multidisciplinary commitment to making essential medicines available at the right time, the right place, and in the right formulation for African children from infancy to