Editorial

Gender equity and reproductive health

I wish to welcome you to this December 2005 issue of *African Health Sciences*. It marks our thematic approach to publishing with this issue focusing largely on gender issues and reproductive health.

Thus our lead article is on a one type of maternal hemorrhage that contributes to both perinatal and maternal morbidity and mortality. In a study of the risk factors for abruptio placenta (separation of a normally sited placenta from the uterine wall before delivery) in Mulago hospital in Kampala, Uganda, Wandabwa and colleagues compared 45 abruptio placenta women to 500 women with normal deliveries. Among the risk factors identified were chronic hypertension, recurrent vaginal bleeding, previous caesarian section and low socioeconomic status.

In a series of 20 cases, Michael Odida describes a rare but important variant of cancer of the cervix in Uganda while Idowu reports on anaemia in pregnancy in Abeokuta in Nigeria.

We also bring you an interesting paper by Dan Kaye and colleagues on the implications of bride price on domestic violence and reproductive health in Uganda. Participants in the study perceived bride price as indicating that a woman was ‘bought’ into the man’s household, which reduced the woman’s decision-making roles. It limited the women’s independence and perpetuated unequal gender power relations especially health seeking behaviour. In a study from the same district, Lynn Atuyambe and colleagues studied the problems faced by pregnant adolescents. They found that the pregnant adolescents lacked basic needs such as shelter, food and security and faced relational problems with families, partners and the community. The authors call for the establishment of ‘youth friendly’ health and counseling services in order to tackle the problems faced by the pregnant adolescents who said: “they make us pregnant, but society blames us”.

From Eritrea, Astier Almedom and colleagues assessed the impact of prolonged displacement on the resilience of Eritrean mothers, using sense of coherence (SOC) scores. The SOC scores of the displaced women were significantly less than those of the non-displaced.

In another paper on domestic violence, Dan Kaye and colleagues report the interaction between food security gender inequity and women’s health in sub Saharan Africa.

The rest of the issue reports on the competence of health workers in Somalia, health seeking behaviour in western Kenya, and under reporting of gravidity in Malawi. We bring you several case reports: reaction (Steven Johnson syndrome) to nevirapine in Uganda, a case of renal aspergilloma in an HIV infected patient, and to crown this important gender issue: a case of giant hydrocele from Jos in Nigeria and anal tuberculosis.

I wish you a merry Christmas and happy New Year!

James K Tumwine
Editor in Chief

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References