

## From Ebola in the slums of East and West Africa to NCDs, mental, child and reproductive health

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The Ebola epidemic in West Africa has received a lot of media coverage: often well meaning but, at times, it has been mired in controversy.<sup>1,2</sup> As the problem hopefully begins to wane it is prudent to have a re-look at the epidemic and tease out lessons. But maybe this is not the time to do so. Several months ago, Mbonye and others wrote for us an article on Uganda's experience with the Ebola outbreaks.<sup>3</sup> Through a 'rural-urban' lens, Sam Okware and others have written for us their experience with management of the Uganda Ebola epidemic.<sup>4</sup> They report that the 'outbreak invasion of the slum areas escalated the spread of infection' and contend that palliative care improved survival. Their piece is highly recommended for you to read.

*Viruses in vogue:* We return to the 'virus' theme with articles on cytomegalovirus<sup>5</sup>, HIV<sup>6</sup> and transfusion transmissible infections.<sup>7</sup> Oncogenic viruses are not spared! HPV and cervical cancer are in vogue. Well, Frank Pan looks at parents' socioeconomic status and intention of vaccinating their adolescent daughters against HPV.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Mugisha and others discuss the feasibility of delivering HPV vaccine to girls aged 10-15 years in Uganda.<sup>9</sup> But what about the boys, since most of these viruses are sexually transmitted?

Now to malaria: What are the coping mechanisms of different socioeconomic groups faced with a challenge of acute malaria? Nigerian researchers<sup>10</sup> provide the answer in their seminal paper published in this issue of AHS. The next 2 papers look at two diverse topics: co-trimoxazole use in HIV infected patients with recurrent TB in Uganda<sup>11</sup>; and diagnosis of cysticercosis in Africa<sup>12</sup>.

*NCDs and mental health focus:* Non communicable diseases once again! The interest just doesn't go away. DRC researchers write for AHS on stroke subtypes and factors associated with ischemic stroke in Kinshasa<sup>13</sup>, while Nigerian researchers report on stroke mortality and its predictors<sup>14</sup>. Susan Whyte and others<sup>15</sup> have written a very interesting piece on non-communicable diseases in

Northern Uganda. We have articles on bone turnover markers in obese Saudi women with type II diabetes mellitus<sup>16</sup> and a number of articles on cancer<sup>17,18,19,20,21</sup>.

Mental health is an important component of NCDs I presume. So we bring you articles on cortisol, adrenaline, blood glucose and lipids in undergraduate students under exam stress in Nigeria<sup>22</sup>; that country where Prince first described '*brain fag syndrome*' more than 50 years ago<sup>23</sup>. Aguocha et. al<sup>24</sup> describe co-morbid anxiety disorders in schizophrenic patients in South Eastern Nigeria, while Chinese workers describe influence of ganoderic acid on trifluoperazine.<sup>25</sup>

*Reproductive and child-health:* We follow this up with articles on: child's gender preference by parents in Malawi<sup>26</sup>, family planning in Kenya<sup>27</sup>, and erectile dysfunction in sleep apnoea.<sup>28</sup> These are closely followed by articles on birth defects<sup>29</sup>, developmental screening<sup>30</sup>, candida colonization of preterm neonates in Uganda<sup>31</sup>; use of ultrasound for estimation of fetal weight,<sup>32</sup> and determinants of health maternal health care utilization.<sup>33</sup>

*Others:* We move to dental surgery<sup>34,35</sup>, neurosurgery, cholelithiasis<sup>36</sup>, anaemia<sup>37,38</sup>, problem based learning<sup>39</sup>, use of simulators in dentistry teaching<sup>40</sup>, community based rehabilitation<sup>41</sup>, and generic drug use in South Africa<sup>42</sup>. We then have a series of case reports and letters<sup>43,44,45,46,47,48,49</sup>; followed by Sam Okware's beautiful piece on the Ebola epidemic in Uganda where we started.<sup>4</sup> Full circle!

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