

From sexual orientation to cochlear transplants in a tropical environment

Welcome to this December issue of *African Health Sciences* in which we bring you topical subjects ranging from sexual orientation of University students¹ to HIV, TB and cochlear transplants in a tropical environment. The menu will have something for you and for all of us interested in health and development in Africa and among the diaspora.

Reproductive health: South African and Thai researchers introduce us to the reproductive health discourse describing reasons non-use of contraception among university students in 22 countries², while Nigerian authors tackle the issue of sexual orientation among university students in what has emerged as Africa's largest economy³. Scandinavian researchers have also bravely tackled another emotive subject among women: skin bleaching.⁴ Their findings are disturbing but not stunning. What we need are projects to sensitize women and men of colour on the physical, cultural and psychological dangers of skin bleaching.

The section continues with a report on hydatidiform moles from Tanzania⁵, intermittent preventive treatment with sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine (IPTp-SP) use during pregnancy in Ghana⁶; and early amniotomy and outcome of spontaneous labour in Enugu, Nigeria⁷. It concludes with a disturbing study of vesico-vaginal fistulae seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo⁸. We have a brief child health section on ultra-sonography and fetal weight⁹, determinants of low birth weight in a traditional birth home¹⁰, and factors associated with delayed initiation of breastfeeding among mothers in Uganda.¹¹

Non communicable diseases: This thrusts us into the non communicable disease section with papers on: micro vascular complications in type 2 diabetes¹², exercises and symptoms of fatigue related to inflammatory cytokines in obese patients with type 2 diabetes¹³; and one on the contribution of ENPP1, TCF7L2, and FTO polymorphisms to type 2 diabetes in mixed ancestry ethnic populations of South Africa¹⁴.

We have articles on vitamin B and metabolic syndrome¹⁵, continuous training on lung function and cardio-respiratory fitness in smokers¹⁶, rheumatic heart disease in Uganda¹⁷, and on diagnosis and management of asthma among adults in resource limited settings.¹⁸

Does bile acid cycle disruption in patients with nasopharyngeal carcinoma promote the elevation of interleukin-10 secretion? Well, read Wang's work¹⁹, or do you want to find out if there is a relationship between gene polymorphism and idiopathic generalized epilepsy?²⁰ You can also transition to stigma in patients with epilepsy²¹. This section ends with papers on post-stroke depression²², and clinical and genetic data of Huntington disease in Moroccan patients²³.

Infectious diseases: The infectious disease section begins with a systematic review of factors associated with tuberculosis recurrence in people living with HIV in Africa²⁴. It continues with the prevalence of positive tuberculin skin test and associated factors among Makerere medical students in Uganda²⁵ and the effects of treatment on free radicals in patients with pulmonary tuberculosis²⁶.

Now, we move into the realm of ethno-pharmacology. What are the in vivo anti-plasmodial activities and toxic impact of lime extract in mice infected with chloroquine-sensitive *Plasmodium berghei*?²⁷ We have reports on the effect of ketolide agents on *Plasmodium falciparum*²⁸; aminoglycoside-modifying enzymes genes in clinical isolates of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*²⁹; and antimicrobial resistance pattern of *Staphylococcus aureus* in Nigeria³⁰ and Turkey.³¹

Have you heard of *Lonicera japonica* and its mechanism of anti-upper respiratory tract infection action in children?³² What about dental caries?³³

Therapeutics: We have two interesting therapeutics papers: one on adverse drug reaction reporting among healthcare workers in Uganda³⁴, and the other on prescription pattern and patients' opinion on healthcare practices in Ibadan, Nigeria.³⁵ We return to the old debate on poverty and inequality – as social determinants of health in Africa³⁶.

We conclude this discourse with case reports on permanent neonatal diabetes³⁷; cochlear implant in Uganda³⁸; cardiomyopathy³⁹; and epicardial fat thickness and cardiovascular involvement.⁴⁰

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