

## Updates on communicable and non-communicable diseases in LMICs.

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In this issue of *African Health Sciences*, we bring you diverse topics ranging from determinants of infant survival, to hernias and genes.

Stanley et al, for example, studied the association of type of birth attendant and place of delivery on infant mortality in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> They found that women in Ghana and Sierra Leone who delivered at a health facility had statistically significant increased odds of infant mortality. Birth attendant type-infant mortality associations were not statistically significant.

Other workers report on factors associated with institutional delivery in North West Ethiopia.<sup>2</sup> Their colleagues determined child mortality trends of under-fives.<sup>3</sup>

The next paper is on tobacco and alcohol use in adolescents with unplanned pregnancies in Mexico.<sup>4</sup> Pregnancy outcomes: are they important? The answer is obvious. What is not so obvious is the effect of vitamin D status on pregnancy outcomes.<sup>5</sup> We then follow with Kazaura's article on exclusive breastfeeding practices in the Coast region, Tanzania.<sup>6</sup>

**Other child health issues:** flexible bronchoscopy in the diagnosis and treatment of children's respiratory diseases in Tunisia;<sup>7</sup> iron deficiency anaemia among apparently healthy pre-school children in Nigeria<sup>8</sup> and asymptomatic bacteriuria in Egyptian school children.<sup>9</sup> All focus on child health. So do the outcome of childhood malignancies at the University of Port Harcourt;<sup>10</sup> and hookworm-like eggs in children's faeces.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Ugandan authors report on the use of mobile phones to support the treatment of acutely ill children in western Uganda.<sup>12</sup>

**Now to sexuality:** Chinese authors discuss the association of depression with menopause symptoms among rural midlife women<sup>13</sup> while researchers from Botswana compare risky sexual behaviours between circumcised and uncircumcised men.<sup>14</sup> Ugandan researchers bring us findings of a study of knowledge and practices related to sexually transmitted infections among women living in Katanga, a slum in Kampala.<sup>15</sup>

**Talking of infections:** Tekki et al assessed seller's staining test (SST) and direct fluorescent antibody test for rapid and accurate diagnosis of rabies,<sup>16</sup> while Saudi researchers report on the impact of weight reduction program on liver function and immunologic response in obese hepatitis B patients.<sup>17</sup> West Nile virus remains endemic in many parts of the world. Nigerian authors report on seasonal abundance and molecular identification of West Nile virus vectors, *Culex pipens* and *Culex quinquefasciatus* in Abeokuta.<sup>18</sup> From the same area we have a report of PCR-Internal Transcribed Spacer (ITS) genes sequencing and phylogenetic analysis of clinical and environmental *Aspergillus* species associated with HIV-TB co infected patients;<sup>19</sup> antibiotics resistance of *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*;<sup>20</sup> and Enterobacteriaceae harboring IMP-4 or IMP-8 carbapenemase.<sup>21</sup>

Others include predictors for post-discharge mortality from sepsis,<sup>22</sup> perceptions and risky behaviors associated with leptospirosis in Thailand;<sup>23</sup> and public health implications of co-occurrence of *Helicobacter pylori* with faecal bacteria in Nairobi river basin.<sup>24</sup>

**Non communicable diseases** refuse to go away as previously noted: Ugandan authors bring their study on factors associated with echocardiographic abnormalities among newly diagnosed diabetic patients at Mulago Hospital;<sup>25</sup> while Ngahane et al report factors affecting adherence to asthma controller therapy in chest clinics in sub-Saharan.<sup>26</sup> From south India we have a treatise on risk factors for allergic disorders,<sup>27</sup> while their compatriots report on eye effects among people with diabetes.<sup>28</sup> Atli et al report on RAR $\beta$  gene methylation as a candidate for primary glioblastoma treatment.<sup>29</sup>

The diagnostic value of MRI and ADC in differential diagnosis of cavernous hemangioma of the liver;<sup>30</sup> and malnutrition in pre-dialysis chronic kidney disease patients.<sup>31</sup> Shehab reports on biochemical response to weight loss in patients with non-alcoholic steatohepatitis.<sup>32</sup>

**Now to surgery:** abdominal wall herniae in females,<sup>33</sup> ocular injuries and eye care among cocoa farmers in

Ghana;<sup>34</sup> and acute burns of the hands,<sup>35</sup> give us a taste of surgery in Africa. So do: stapedotomy and its effect on hearing.<sup>36</sup> We have a comparison of the effect of adjuvant intrathecal midazolam to fentanyl on postoperative pain for patients undergoing orthopaedic surgery under spinal anaesthesia,<sup>37</sup> and the spectrum of ear, nose and throat foreign bodies in Nigeria.<sup>38</sup> We also have the epidemiology of injuries in female school soccer players,<sup>39</sup> and lower limb injuries in frontal-impact road traffic collisions.<sup>40</sup> The recurrent theme of cell-phones is back: do they improve health literacy?<sup>41</sup>

We end this treatise with articles on chemicals for hypercholesterolemic action<sup>42</sup> and rationing medical education;<sup>43</sup> endoscopic capacity in West Africa;<sup>44</sup> and behavioural studies on ethanol leaf extract of *Grewia carpinifolia*.<sup>45</sup>

As you contemplate what next: think of the scourges afflicting this world: *Ebola*; *Zika*; heart disease; diabetes and its twin sister obesity. Are we doing enough individually and collectively to stem these epidemics? Well, the jury is still out.

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