

## Infections interplay with non-communicable diseases.

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In this *September issue*, we bring you very diverse, but interesting, papers. South African authors have written for us about the quality of rapid HIV testing and testers' compliance.<sup>1</sup> They found sub-standard practices in relation to testing – a matter of concern. Nigerian authors on the other hand report adverse outcomes of TB-HIV patients at PEPFAR/DO'TS centres<sup>2</sup>, while Ethiopian authors have similar results.<sup>3</sup>

In keeping with the non-communicable interest of *AHS*, we bring you an interesting paper on diabetes mellitus among tuberculosis patients from Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> We have a disturbing paper from Malaysia reporting on molecular and serological detection of occult hepatitis B virus in 5.5% of healthy hepatitis B surface antigen-negative blood donors in Malaysia.<sup>5</sup>

From Tanzania, we have a paper on the sero-prevalence and factors associated with *Helicobacter pylori* infection among adult patients with dyspepsia attending the gastroenterology unit in a tertiary hospital.<sup>6</sup> Up to 39% of the patients tested positive, and untreated drinking water was the main culprit.

From West Africa, we have a paper on parasitic infections among school children in São Tomé and Príncipe.<sup>7</sup> Two thirds of school children were infected despite regular deworming with mebendazole. Still on helminths: Angolan authors report on concentration methods for studying the prevalence of helminths<sup>8</sup>, and their finding that 32% of school children are infected. To cap our infectious disease treatise of this issue, we have reports on population genomic diversity of *Plasmodium falciparum* in Nigerian patients.<sup>9</sup>

Now back to non-communicable diseases: Magloire Nekoua and colleagues have studied modulation of immune cells and Th1/Th2 cytokines in insulin-treated type 2 diabetes mellitus<sup>10</sup>. Shehab, on the other hand, has studied the impact of weight loss on oxidative stress and inflammatory cytokines in obese type 2 diabetic patients.<sup>11</sup>

Jean-Bosco Jouda and others bring us their paper on anti-cancer and anti-bacterial properties of a fungus.<sup>12</sup>

For once, we have a qualitative study on experiences of adults undergoing chemotherapy at the Uganda Cancer Institute.<sup>13</sup> Keeping with cancer, we have an interesting Sudanese paper on the 'histologic chemotherapy for colorectal cancer'<sup>14</sup>. Our interest lies in the fact that colorectal adenocarcinoma is be-

coming extremely common in Africa, possibly due to change in dietary habits of our people.

Sickle cell anaemia seems not to spare any system of the body. Nigerian workers have evaluated left ventricular systolic function of sickle cell anaemia patients.<sup>15</sup> They found that 'the cardiac out-put, cardiac index and velocity of circumferential shortening were all significantly increased.' Chinese scientists have found that IL-17 and ang II were associated with refractory hypertension risk in hemodialysis patients.<sup>16</sup> Nigerian authors report on community reintegration and related factors in a stroke sample.<sup>17</sup>; while their colleagues describe the clinical characteristics, outcome pattern and predictors of mortality in a cohort of diabetic patients with stroke.<sup>18</sup>

Now to nutrition: We have an RCT on the efficacy of early skin-to-skin contact on the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in term neonates.<sup>19</sup> The key message is that Early SSC significantly improved the rate of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 weeks of age among healthy neonates.

Saudi researchers report on the effect of treadmill walking exercise on bone mineral status and inflammatory cytokines in obese asthmatic patients with long term intake of corticosteroids.<sup>20</sup>

From Botswana, we have a report on asthma among school children in Gaborone.<sup>21</sup>

Mental health: South African researchers report on substance abuse.<sup>22</sup> Substance abuse is not restricted to South Africa. From Ethiopia, we have disturbing reports of alcohol and khat use among University students.<sup>23</sup> Almost 1 in 3 take alcohol and 1 in 6 chew khat. Suicide is another mental health problem covered in this issue.<sup>24</sup>

Now to health system strengthening through collaboration.<sup>25</sup> Dutch and Ghanaian teams collaborated in supporting surgical teams to impart knowledge and skills leading to enhanced knowledge despite limited resources.

Does personality matter in traffic accidents? Indian researchers<sup>26</sup> found that most of all trauma patients had impulsive personality.

Does ApoE genotype matter? Researchers from South Africa describe its effect on lipid profile and lipoproteins during normal pregnancy in a Southern African population.<sup>27</sup> They found that ApoE4 genotype was associated with increased total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol concentrations during pregnancy.

We have a paper from Zimbabwe<sup>28</sup> on mitigating the surgical divide. What is the relationship between IL-10 gene -819C/T polymorphism and the risk of inflammatory bowel disease? Read the meta-analysis by Haien Wu<sup>29</sup>.

Then we have a series of case reports on rectal inflammatory fibroid polyp;<sup>30</sup> and one on abdominal epilepsy.<sup>31</sup>

We end this review with letters to the editor and their rebuttal<sup>32,33</sup>.

Enjoy your AHS! It's totally free!

**James K Tumwine**  
**Editor in Chief**

*African Health Sciences*

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