

NCD epidemic and sexual reproductive health issues in the infectious disease world

James K Tumwine

Editor in Chief, African Health Sciences

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The non-communicable diseases (NCDs) epidemic is now well established in sub-Saharan Africa with diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, injuries and cancer coming to the fore. In this December 2019 issue of *African Health Sciences*, we reflect the importance of NCDs with papers on diabetes mellitus¹⁻⁵, and cardiovascular disease⁶⁻⁷. We have also highlighted the importance of exercise⁸⁻⁹ in the prevention and modulation of NCDs.

This year there has been a lot of talk on climate change, the environment and health. We have an interesting paper from Egypt¹⁰, that estimates the number of hospital admission respiratory cases attributed to SO₂ and NO₂. Substance abuse is also a key issue affecting the health of our people. Muniu and others describe the determinants of harmful use of alcohol among adult urban slum dwellers in Kenya¹¹, while Musamy and others describe corneal damage after the modern practice of vaping¹².

The next few papers are on depression in pregnancy¹³, visual acuity testing in Ghana¹⁴ and use of a laryngeal mask in anaesthesia¹⁵.

Then we follow all these with sexual/reproductive health issues: sexual debut in South Africa¹⁶, sexual dysfunction among the mentally ill in Nigeria¹⁷ and high risk of human papilloma virus HPV among women with genital mutilation¹⁸. These issues continue with risk factors for dysmenorrhea among Ghanaian students¹⁹, treating menopausal flashes in Turkey²⁰, perception of breast cancer in Ethiopia²¹, attitude of women to reproductive health issues²²; and awareness of congenital toxoplasmosis in Tanzania²³. We conclude this theme with papers on the impact of parity and other issues of hypertensive mothers on birthweight and mode of delivery²⁴.

Now follows perinatal mortality²⁵ and still births²⁶ in Nigeria. What about child nutrition? It cannot be forgotten of course. Tanzanian authors describe infant diets²⁷, while work from Nigeria highlights the importance of child malnutrition²⁸ and management of cerebral palsy²⁹. It's now time for workforce and education issues. Anyim

and others have an interesting treatise on stress among medical health workers³⁰, while Mbatha and others have researched core competencies for indigenous training of traditional health workers³¹. Medical error. What is it exactly? Mauti and others explore this subject³², while Callaghan muses over pseudoscience in medicine³³.

Then we have several papers on anaesthesia³⁴⁻³⁶. Dentistry³⁷ and HIV³⁸⁻⁴¹ to spice this issue while the seminal paper on *Pneumocystis jirovecii*⁴² is the jewel in the crown! Specific bacterial infections⁴³⁻⁴⁴ and schistosomiasis⁴⁵ conclude this infectious disease section.

We end this editorial where we started: on non-communicable diseases; and in this case, on issues on cancer. Hence, we have papers on endometrial carcinoma⁴⁶, Burkitt lymphoma⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸ and pleomorphic adenoma⁴⁹.

Clearly as the debate on climate change and the environment enters a new gear, we need to be aware of the importance of the interplay between the environment and health, focusing on NCDs, infections and reproductive health issues.

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