Editor’s Choice

Welcome to this September 2011 issue of African Health Sciences. We bring you three main themes: non-communicable diseases, health systems and nutrition. This choice has been deliberate because this year the international community has been focusing on non-communicable diseases. Whether this emphasis is justified remains debatable with some arguing that infectious diseases will remain a big challenge in low-income countries. It would be foolhardy, none the less, to bury our heads in the sand because non-communicable diseases are a real issue adding a real burden to the already poorly resourced health systems in Africa and elsewhere.

Non-communicable diseases articles include; one on spirometry in teenage sickle cell anemia patients. The second article reports experience with snoring and disordered breathing while the next one is on nose and throat complications associated with passive smoking! South African authors report factors associated with early smoking initiation in adolescents in seven African countries. Excellent material!

We follow this with another South African article on actual and perceived substance use by health science students. Then comes the famous brain-fag syndrome originally described by Prince in 1960. Akin-Odanye and colleagues describe factors associated with depression among breast cancer patients receiving chemotherapy.

Abakay muses over mesothelioma while Ahmed Adamu reports on the management and outcome of gastric carcinoma in Zaria. Lewis on the other hand compares triage methods for Kenyan women screening positive for cervical intra epithelial cancer by visual inspection of the cervix using acetic acid. Their second paper is on a cryotherapy service for women with cervical cancer.

Kazaura and others describe causes of obstetric fistula in Tanzania while Eva Britta describes self-reported sexual behaviour among adolescents. Regassa on the other hand caps this sexuality theme with an account of sexual behaviour among adolescent girls. Regassa on the other hand caps this sexuality theme with an account of sexual behaviour among adolescent girls. Korkowu on the other hand describes factors associated with depression among breast cancer patients receiving chemotherapy.

We launch into lipid profiles, metabolic syndrome, bipolar disorders and type 2 diabetes mellitus. That elusive appendicitis in children: can we use platelet volume for its diagnosis?

We then have a few case reports: one on talipes equinovarus, pancreatic cancer in a boy, and type 2 diabetes in a child. Under the health systems theme we have an article on health information access, use of personal digital assistants and out of pocket payments for health services and violence against health workers dampen the climax. The nutrition section has articles on breast feeding: Italy and Ethiopia. I wish you happy reading and look forward to your comments on these or other articles from African Health Science.

Finally, I wish to thank our editorial staff, reviewers, authors and readers for the enormous support. We also thank our partners and funders for the confidence. God bless you all.

James K. Tumwine
Editor in Chief

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