Back to our roots: infections, HIV and maternal mortality in Africa

In this issue we return to our roots: infectious diseases, their presentation, management and prevention in Africa. Hence we have no apologies to make for highlighting infectious diseases while most are retreating to the non-communicable disease agenda. But we have some non-communicable diseases in this issue too. How passive smoking affects infection and inflammation and others.

We bring you articles on haematological and biochemical indices of patients undergoing treatment, while correlates of HIV infection in clinics in Mpumalanga in South Africa and controversies on maternal mortality in Africa.

Uganda authors report their work on religiosity for HIV prevention in Uganda. We have articles on clinical characteristics and risk factors for peri-partum cardiomyopathy, while Nigerian workers report their timely work on predictors of maternal mortality in institutional deliveries in Nigeria, a subject that will continue exercising minds of all of us who work in Africa this year and beyond.

It would appear that we largely know why our women, sisters, daughters, nieces, aunts are dying of pregnancy related conditions. But why do the maternal mortality figures continue to be high? Are we making the radical changes in our health sector that will be needed to make child birth safe for the mother and child? Or are we stuck in our old ways? Holding workshops at which we churn out old fashioned noises and continue business as usual. What can we do to involve our people in their homes, in their communities to do something about this? Can we learn anything from the way the continent tackled the issue of HIV/AIDS? Let us hear from you.

The rest of the issue covers diverse subjects such as: changes in plasma IL4, TNFα and CRP in response to regular passive smoking at home among healthy school children in Khartoum, Sudan. As we ponder maternal mortality, Nigerian scientists report their work on anaesthetic and obstetric challenges of morbid obesity in caesarean deliveries. While others are struggling with the issue of high mortality ratios in Africa, some couples are desperate to have babies, and infertility remains a bitter pill for them. However a select few have access to in vitro fertilization! We bring you an interesting article on hepatitis C virus (HCV) status in newborns born to HCV positive women performing intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

The rest of the articles are on facial approximation, Gleason scores in prostate cancer patients, dermatomyositis and HIV, quackery, and health status of diabetic patients from where? Yes: From Misurata in Libya.

Finally we wish to thank all of you authors, readers, reviewers and editors for the enormous work. We also wish to thank AHS partners without whose support African health Sciences would not have become such a success! Thank you very much indeed.

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Editor in Chief

References