Editorial

From sexual orientation to cochlear transplants in a tropical environment

Welcome to this December issue of African Health Sciences in which we bring you topical subjects ranging from sexual orientation of University students1 to HIV, TB and cochlear transplants in a tropical environment. The menu will have something for you and for all of us interested in health and development in Africa and among the diaspora.

Reproductive health: South African and Thai researchers introduce us to the reproductive health discourse describing reasons non-use of contraception among university students2 in 22 countries3, while Nigerian authors tackle the issue of sexual orientation among university students in what has emerged as Africa’s largest economy4. Scandinavian researchers have also bravely tackled another emotive subject among women: skin bleaching.4 Their findings are disturbing but not stunning. What we need are projects to sensitize women and men of colour on the physical, cultural and psychological dangers of skin bleaching.

The section continues with a report on hydatidiform moles from Tanzania5, intermittent preventive treatment with sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine (IPTp-SP) use during pregnancy in Ghana6; and early amniotomy and outcome of spontaneous labour in Enugu, Nigeria7. It concludes with a disturbing study of vesico-vaginal fistulae seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo8. We have a brief child health section on utra-sonography and fetal weight9, determinants of low birth weight in a traditional birth home10, and factors associated with delayed initiation of breastfeeding among mothers in Uganda.11

Non communicable diseases: This thrusts us into the non communicable disease section with papers on: microvascular complications in type 2 diabetes12; exercises and symptoms of fatigue related to inflammatory cytoxines in obese patients with type 2 diabetes13; and one on the contribution of ENPP1, TCF7L2, and FTO polymorphisms to type 2 diabetes in mixed ancestry ethnic populations of South Africa14. We have articles on vitamin B and metabolic syndrome15, continuous training on lung function and cardio-respiratory fitness in smokers16, rheumatic heart disease in Uganda17, and on diagnosis and management of asthma among adults in resource limited settings.18 Does bile acid cycle disruption in patients with nasopharyngeal carcinoma promote the elevation of interleukin-10 secretion? Well, read Wang’s work19, or do you want to find out if there is a relationship between gene polymorphism and idiopathic generalized epilepsy20? You can also transition to stigma in patients with epilepsy21. This section ends with papers on post-stroke depression22, and clinical and genetic data of Huntington disease in Moroccan patients23.


Now, we move into the realm of ethno-pharmacology. What are the in vivo anti-plasmodial activities and toxic impact of lime extract in mice infected with chloroquine-sensitive Plasmodium berghei?27 We have reports on the effect of ketolide agents on Plasmodium falciparum28; aminoglycoside-modifying enzymes genes in clinical isolates of Pseudomonas aeruginosa29; and antimicrobial resistance pattern of Staphylococcus aureus in Nigeria30 and Turkey.31

Have you heard of Lonicera japonica and its mechanism of anti-upper respiratory tract infection action in children?32 What about dental caries?33

Therapeutics: We have two interesting therapeutics papers: one on adverse drug reaction reporting among healthcare workers in Uganda34, and the other on prescription pattern and patients’ opinion on healthcare practices in Ibadan, Nigeria.35 We return to the old debate on poverty and inequality – as social determinants of health in Africa36. We conclude this discourse with case reports on permanent neonatal diabetes37; cochlear implant in Uganda38; cardiomyopathy39; and epicardial fat thickness and cardiovascular involvement.40

References:
1. Turnwine JK: University students sexual orientation, contra-
24. Moodley Y, Govender K: A systematic review of published literature describing factors associated with


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