Editor’s choice
Quality and hygiene in health service provision, water and food

Welcome to our first issue among a series of four issues, African Health Sciences will be publishing this year. As a result of your overwhelming support and contributions African Health Sciences will, from March 2005, be publishing four instead of three issues per annum. We wish to thank all our authors, readers, board members, international consultants, editors and others who have contributed to the success of our journal. May the year 2005 be a special year of exceeding quality in all that you do.

The current issue of African Health Sciences lays emphasis on water quality and hygiene, in addition to sexuality, reproductive health, pharmacology, surgery and others. We have lined up an exciting menu of nine original articles with a prelude editorial, on health and hygiene, by Astier M. Almedon who is an Eritrean professor of science and humanitarianism at Tufts University, Boston, USA.

We start our journey in Keren, Eritrea, where Rigbe1 and Almedon et al demonstrate the value of the simple, but time proven practice of hand washing as a measure of quality of care, so effective in prevention of hospital acquired infections. Hand washing, enshrined in many cultures including old Jewish laws, and demonstrated by Hungarian Physician Igtaic Fulop (1818-1865), as effective in infection prevention, is often neglected by many physicians and yet if properly and routinely practiced would prevent transmission of the majority hospital acquired infections. Next we travel to Kisenyi and Katwe, sub-urban areas of Kampala City, Uganda where, according to Haruna, Ejobi and Kabagambie2, water from some protected springs maybe unsuitable for drinking without treatment. A disturbing finding from these sprawling slums in Uganda’s capital city! Our next stop over is the Eastern Cape province, South Africa where Nancy and Shukla3, after looking into factors for motivating populations to adopt safe hygienic practices, conclude that regular water supply, provision of sanitation facilities, stake holder participation and consumer sanitation knowledge are key in motivation of community hygiene. Sasanya, Okeng and Muganwa then turn our attention to food hygiene, in particular, the quality of commercial eggs for human consumption4. They are concerned about the high risk of sulfonamide residue exposure to consumers, due to poor farm and management of alleged sexually assaulted females at Mulago hospital, Kampala, while several case reports and series on neurobrucellosis5 and duodenal ulcer6 complete the series. UK and Uganda researchers report on the role of clinical officers7 while an Emirate gynaecologist updates us on the pharmacological management of female urinary incontinence8. Hence this is a “must read” issue.

We thank you very much for your contributions and wish you interesting and informative reading.

Michael Kawooya
Associate Editor

REFERENCES