
Advancing Clinical Research and Practice in Sub-Saharan Africa: Insights from the Current Issue

Amaka N Ocheke

Editor-in-Chief, Highland Medical Research Journal<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/hmrj.v25i2.1>

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this issue of the Highland Medical Research Journal (HMRJ), Volume 25, Issue 2, July-December 2025. This collection of original research, case reports, and scholarly contributions reflects our continued commitment to advancing medical knowledge and improving healthcare delivery in Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa.

The seven articles presented here address a diverse range of clinical challenges, from sleep disorders among healthcare workers to rare causes of chronic neck pain. Collectively, they illuminate important aspects of disease burden, risk factors, therapeutic interventions, and outcomes that are directly relevant to our local context.

Sleep, Productivity, and Cognitive Intervention

Uba and Longbap's study on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for work-related insomnia among health personnel at Jos University Teaching Hospital is particularly timely. Shift work remains an unavoidable reality in healthcare delivery, yet its toll on worker wellbeing and job productivity is often underappreciated. Their finding that CBT produced a 56.7% improvement in job productivity among the intervention group ($p = 0.031$) provides compelling evidence for integrating psychological interventions into occupational health programmes. As we strive to retain our healthcare workforce and maintain quality of care, addressing sleep health is no longer optional—it is essential.

Neonatal Kidney Injury: Identifying Modifiable Risks

Onyenuche and colleagues present a prospective cohort study on acute kidney injury (AKI) among hospitalised newborns. With a prevalence of 14.7%, AKI represents a significant burden in our special care baby units. The identification of sepsis and dehydration as independent risk factors—each conferring approximately five-fold increased risk—offers clear targets for prevention. Notably, 62% of affected babies were born outside health facilities, underscoring the need to strengthen linkages between community deliveries and postnatal care.

Adolescent Obesity: Urban and Rural Realities

Ekere and colleagues examine the prevalence and risk factors of obesity among adolescents in Jos. Their finding that overweight was more prevalent in rural (7.6%) than urban (4.9%) settings challenges the assumption that non-communicable diseases are primarily urban phenomena. Gender (female) and higher parental socioeconomic status emerged as independent risk factors. As Nigeria undergoes rapid nutritional transition, school-based

prevention programmes must reach both rural and urban adolescents.

Cerebral Palsy : Haematological and Biochemical Profiles

Alalade and colleagues provide valuable descriptive data on haematological and biochemical parameters in children with cerebral palsy attending a neuro-developmental clinic in Lagos. Anaemia was significantly more common in children under five years ($p = 0.045$), while alkaline phosphatase levels declined with advancing age ($p = 0.030$). These findings remind us that children with neurodevelopmental disabilities require proactive nutritional and metabolic monitoring, not merely management of their primary neurological condition.

Cataract Surgery and Quality of Life

Ribadu and colleagues demonstrate, from Yola, Adamawa State, what many ophthalmologists have long observed clinically: cataract surgery profoundly improves both visual function and quality of life. Among 432 patients followed for six weeks postoperatively, improvements were most remarkable in mobility and sensory subscales. The substantial reduction in patients requiring assistance with self-care, mobility, and social activities ($p < 0.001$) provides powerful evidence for expanding accessible cataract surgical services.

Eagle Syndrome: A Diagnostic Consideration

Ogholoh and colleagues present a case report of Eagle syndrome—elongation of the styloid process causing chronic neck pain and dysphagia. This rare condition, diagnosed radiologically with bilateral styloid processes measuring 6.60 cm and 6.39 cm (normal < 3 cm), reminds us that uncommon diagnoses should not be forgotten when common ones do not fit. The patient's three-year symptom duration before diagnosis also highlights the need for greater awareness of this entity among clinicians managing chronic cervicofacial pain.

Looking Forward

As we close Volume 25, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the reviewers listed in this issue, whose voluntary service ensures the quality and integrity of our peer-review process. I also thank our authors, readers, and the management of Jos University Teaching Hospital for their steadfast support.

The Highland Medical Research Journal remains committed to publishing evidence that is locally relevant, methodologically sound, and clinically applicable. We encourage submissions from across the region and look forward to advancing medical knowledge together.