

EDITORIAL

Sexual behaviour

As we mark yet another World AIDS Day the HIV/AIDS pandemic shows no sign of abating. If anything global figures are frightening and access to anti-retroviral drugs is not yet a reality even though the cost of medication has gone down.

But all is not lost. There is evidence to show the epidemic has leveled off in several sub Saharan countries such as Uganda. None the less, as Ntozi et al¹ show, very high-risk groups such as commercial sex workers, street children, long haul truck drivers, barmaids and adolescents have only changed their sexual behaviour a little: no solace for those campaigning hard for significant change!

Keeping within the sexual practices theme, this issue of *African Health Sciences* also contains a very significant article by Dr. Odar and colleagues² who report on sexual practices of women within six months of child birth. Almost half the women resumed sexual intercourse during the puerperium in response to the spouse's demand. The early resumption of sexual intercourse was associated with high morbidity rates a situation calling for appropriate post partum sexual advice.

African Health Sciences also brings you a report of acute toxicity of the root-bark of *Fagara zanthoxyloides* an important source of herbal medicines used for elephantiasis, toothache, impotence, gonorrhoea and amenorrhoea³.

The authors conclude that *Fagara zanthoxyloides* is safe but associated with death through some yet unknown cerebral mechanism.

Meel⁴ has carried out an interesting operational study on the adequacy and efficiency of nursing staff in a child-welfare clinic at Umtata General Hospital, South Africa. The conclusion was that there is under-utilization of the staff at the hospital.

Other points covered include a case report of imaging features of brain tuberculoma from Tanzania, a review for CME in the relevance of the nutrition for mother and child health.

We have an interesting letter from a patient in Nairobi, Kenya who visited his G.P. with a stomach complaint. He ended up fighting his

physician who tried to do a rectal examination (which the patient thought was outright sodomy!) on him. The letter reminds the doctors and other health workers to explain all procedures and "carry" the patient with us all along.

Finally I wanted to remind you that *African Health Sciences* is indexed on MEDLINE, PUBMED and Index Medicus. We have also got an agreement with African Journals online and Extenza to host our website and offer the journal articles (in pdf format) to our respective readers

We thank our readers, staff, the authors, reviewers, members of the editorial board and all our well wishers. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

James K Tumwine
Editor

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