EDITORIAL

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THE INCRESING DANGERS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Infectious Diseases are becoming more and more important as causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide. This is exemplified by the recent outbreak of cholera in the northern parts of the Cameroons and Nigeria that claimed over 400 lives. Bacterial sepsis also occurs both as epidemics and endemically. Bloodstream infections are common in Africa and are associated with high mortality. Non-malaria bloodstream infections in Africa are due to *Salmonella enterica* (58·4% of these are non-typhoidal *Salmonella*), the most prevalent isolate overall and in adults; and (18·3% overall) are due to *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, the most common isolate in children. Other common isolates include *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli (1)*

The work by Kanga and associates in this edition showed that septicaenia had an **overall incidence of 5.79 per 1000 admissions in a Cameroonian Hospital; with Gram positive cocci, being the commonest aetiologic agents.** The importance of Gram-positive organisms as pathogens is increasing, and toxic shock syndrome (TSS) is likely to be under diagnosed as a complication of septicaemia in patients with staphylococcal or group A streptococcal infection who present with shock (2).

The articles by **Omogbai and associates, and Liaqat** and associates show that more needs to be done by promoting aseptic procedures, so as to prevent nosocomial infections, such as endocarditis, meningitis, septicaemia, osteomyelitis, nephritis, etc, in dental practice. Such complications could be life-threatening, particularly in these days of multidrug resistant bacterial infections.

A common cause of bloodstream infection is food poisoning by salmonella as was widely reported in the United States of America last year. It resulted from feacal contaminated animal feeds of poultry layers; and was transmitted to man via their eggs. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that Salmonella infections alone sicken 40,000 people each year in the United States, though the actual number of infections is likely much higher because many cases are mild and not diagnosed or reported. Currently, Salmonella is the focus of an ongoing U.S. public health investigation into contaminated chicken eggs.**

There is a need to improve personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, adequate disposal of household and human waste, and general hygiene and antisepsis in health centers. Food handlers need to be investigated annually to see whether or not they are carriers of pathogenic microbes

1. Reddy, E. A., Shaw, A.V. Crump, J. A. Community-acquired bloodstream infections in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The Lancet Infectious Diseases, 2010 10 (6): 417 - 432,

2. Lappin, E. and, Ferguson, A. J. Gram-positive toxic shock syndromes. The Lancet Infectious Diseases, 2009. 9 (5): 281 - 290, May

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