

Editorial

Sexuality, reproductive health, and other challenges that stubbornly refuse to go away

Our recurrent theme of sexuality(1) and reproductive health is back with us. Family planning services have been free with the aim of ensuring universal access in sub Saharan Africa without much success. Gambian researchers report on married couples' knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning with variable results(2). Keeping with this theme, Nigerian workers report on perceptions of microbicides among health care providers.(3) They contend that there are knowledge gaps about microbicides among the health workforce. Not surprising!

Gender equality and empowerment are in vogue especially after the issue was assigned a specific millennium development goal.(4) Despite this, maternal mortality remains a challenge in Ethiopia,(5) and the issue of sexual violence against female sex workers is widespread in Abuja.(6) To compound the challenges, consanguinity in Saudi Arabia refuses to go away with conservative prevalence of 30 percent.(7) Studies on health service utilization(8), gestational age estimation using ultra sound(9) and health seeking behaviour(10), break the monotony.

Back to sexuality! Ugandan authors(11) report on testosterone levels in men and recommend further studies especially in the context of HIV/AIDS transmission. Chinese researchers, on the other hand, report decreased levels of testosterone in males with lung cancer.(12)

This review would not have been complete without inclusion of infectious disease issues. Hence it includes work on antimicrobial activity of bacilli against other eye pathogens(13) and a report on antimicrobial activity of a special plant.(14) While there have been a lot of emphasis on non communicable diseases, infections just refuse to away and we have to confront them in tandem with NCDs that have reached epidemic proportions in sub Saharan Africa, this century. Hence the prevalence of hepatitis B in Nigerian children is still worrying despite vaccination(15), and sore throats(16), schistosomiasis(17) and big brother malaria(18), are a big issue! What about HIV? You would ask. Well it cannot be outdone. Lipodystrophy among HIV infected children on HAART(19) makes interesting reading while hepatitis C and aerobic exercise(20) completes the infection section, only just. Look out for nodding syndrome and others.

The rest of our review covers pesticides in Uganda(21), nodding syndrome in Tanzania(22), and attention

deficit/hyperactivity disorder and viral infections(23). Stroke in sickle cell anaemia(24), making caesarean sections safe(25), HIV neuropathy in Rwanda(26), all conspire to make to make a very interesting literally concoction.

Have you heard of breast cancer in men? Well it is in the news this week in African Health Sciences (27). It is all about BRCA2 genes in men with this cancer. Who pays the bill for medical education(28) and hospitalization(29) for sickle cell? Well only if you have very strong teeth(30) to chew the cud or do not have strong views on abortion(31)! Spare your ribs and settle for very productive reading and reflection.

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