

FROM THE EDITOR

I am lucky enough to be writing this on a remote Madagascar peninsula. We've become acquainted with intriguing lemurs and the fearsome fusa, chameleons and boa constrictors, and just at the moment life is really not too shabby! I feel a twinge of guilt that the promised fertility and TB and health care worker guidelines do not feature in this issue, but they are well on their way and will make a double-act appearance in the next one.

However, our second issue does have a nice array of other interest! The study by Van Deventer shows how, at primary health clinic level, extraordinary things are being done to make an impact on the morbidity and mortality of HIV. Our colleagues from Nigeria are sending through some interesting copy, and an article in this edition looks at knowledge, attitudes and practices of long-distance truck drivers there. Firnhaber and Michelow give a useful review of the impact of human papillomavirus and cervical carcinoma in HIV infection. Price's provocative piece on culture and moralism may have application in a number of prevention areas. Von Mollendorf reviews early acute HIV infection. There is increasing evidence of its impact, and already the pendulum is swinging back to earlier treatment.

The HIV AIDS Vaccine Ethics Group based at UKZN (Pietermaritzburg) has been instrumental in helping South African researchers unpack the ethical and legal complexities of involving minors in research, and in this issue Slack and Strode examine some of the issues surrounding mandatory reporting of activities or events during such research.

This issue is the first after the gratifyingly successful 4th South African AIDS Conference. To remind those of you who attended and give those who didn't a taste of some of the subjects covered, we asked the track chairs of each of the six tracks and their respective rapporteurs for a concise report. We also publish reports on two excellent satellite symposia.

Finally, we have received the sad news that a friend, respected colleague, activist and treader, Dr Steve Andrews, passed away in Cape Town recently. South Africa has lost a hero. Our sincere condolences go to his family and loved ones. We will miss you, Steve.

LINDA-GAIL BEKKER
Editor

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

It is with shock and disbelief that we heard of the death of Dr Steve Andrews. South Africa has lost a passionate humanitarian and a superb doctor. The Society owes him a huge debt – he has been part of a small and committed group that has overseen the little HIV interest group grow to one of the largest and most influential medical special interest organisations in the world. His dedication and hard work on the Exco, his leadership in terms of ethics, guidelines and policy, and his moral clarity on so many things we deal with will be sorely missed.

Meetings were never boring when Steve was in the room. He would bring energy, controversy and humour to the most tedious, humdrum and badly chaired policy meeting, making sure that everyone was on their toes. His passion meant that he was constantly engaged in some battle. Whether it was with medical aids refusing to pay for treatments for his patients, a government refusing to take responsibility for its people, SAMA not making a stand on something, or a pharma company making a drug available at high prices after he had assisted them with a clinical trial, he would wade in fearlessly and bravely, telling it like it is.

His patients' problems were legendary. He would revel in acing me when I had a hard case that I needed advice on – I would say 'I have an HIV patient with x disease, y weird sexual fetish, and z terrible social circumstances,' and he'd laugh loudly and say 'I have 10 of those. I raise you a drug addiction, four girlfriends, a boyfriend, AND he is senior in government.' He was safe hands for referrals of difficult cases in the private sector, and recognised by his peers as a major academic force.

I am going to miss visiting Cape Town, with Steve insisting on taking me out for a beer that became several and then dinner, where we solved all the country's health problems, as well as reversing the global HIV epidemic. He had an infectious fire for justice, often trading late-night e-mails with us for hours, interspersed with politically incorrect cartoons. I am going to miss him very, very much. We all are.

Hamba kahle, Steve.

Francois, on behalf of the SA HIV Clinicians Society
Exco

