

# FROM THE EDITOR



The rate of co-infection with HIV and tuberculosis (TB) leaves local doctors in no doubt as to the importance of secondary preventive therapy against tuberculosis. Gavin Churchyard's study, described in this issue, showed that isoniazid reduced the incidence of recurrent TB in miners by 55% compared with no prophylaxis. He suggests that international guidelines be expanded to include recommendations for secondary preventive therapy in settings where TB prevalence is high, such as in South Africa.

A lot has been said about the Bangkok Conference particularly regarding the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and the related issue of resistance when nevirapine is used as a single agent. Neil Martinson and Steven Miller cover this topic thoroughly and eloquently in two separate articles, followed by an informative overview of the entire conference by Francois Venter, who hopes that papers presented at the 2006 Toronto Conference will offer more analysis of raw data as opposed to anecdotal experience.

Beset by problems, including disclosure on birth certificates, trends in AIDS mortality are difficult to determine, but Sudeshni Naidoo and Francis Mburu studied HIV/AIDS mortality among inpatients at Motebang Hospital in Lesotho and found that over a 15-year period AIDS had modified the mortality trend by raising the death rate of younger adults, thereby deviating from the natural trend. Almost 70% of all deaths at the hospital were due to communicable diseases, maternal, perinatal and nutritional conditions, of which 70 - 80% were due to AIDS-related conditions. The researchers believe that their data will serve as a basis on which to evaluate the impact of current and future interventions, e.g. the proposed provision of antiretroviral drugs.



Bloemfontein researchers studied supplementary infant feeding as an important vector of disease transmission and determined the level of microbial contamination in bottle feeds given to infants living in Mangaung. Nearly 85% of bottle feeds tested were classified as unfit for human consumption, leading Fredrick Veldman and Jaco Brink to underline the need to address the content of feeding literacy programmes.

Two interesting case studies are presented in this issue, followed by a legal opinion on the importance of funeral and estate planning by Elsabé Klinck.

Much work still needs to be done in southern Africa to improve the treatment and care of HIV-infected people and their families and communities. It is hoped that the national antiretroviral roll-out will gain momentum and give hope, better health and longer lives to those people who qualify for treatment according to the National Guidelines (CD4+ count < 200 cells/ $\mu$ l irrespective of WHO stage, or WHO stage IV disease irrespective of CD4+ count).

In the interim, a national guideline committee of Society experts from both the private and public sectors has compiled a guideline for the management of HIV-infected people not yet requiring or qualifying for antiretroviral treatment. It is hoped that this will assist health care professionals in maintaining the health of infected people for as long as possible prior to the need for antiretroviral therapy. It will be published shortly.

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