

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

More than any other field of medicine, HIV medicine is evolving rapidly. Not only are new drugs, new drug targets and new strategies being discovered, but also guidelines must be reviewed continually as new information about how to use them comes to light. The recent flood of controversy in the world media surrounding nevirapine highlights this, and also illustrates the benefit of this sort of information being digested by experts and repackaged for local consumption.

There is a need for health care workers to have regular and reliable access to new information, updates and continuing medical education. The number of new companies and organisations offering continuing medical education bears testimony to the growing industry and has markedly increased the number and variety of updates

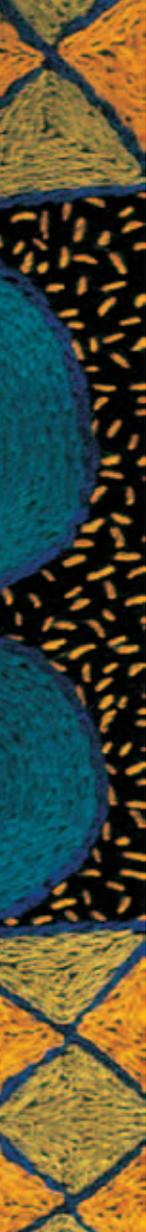


currently available to the medical health worker in South Africa today. The *Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine* is the official journal of the South African HIV Clinicians Society, and as such is sent to every member of the society (currently more than 8 000). It has become an important way for guidelines to be dispersed and for locally relevant information to reach the most rural areas, including other countries in Africa.

Since inception of the journal in July 2000 an impressive list of guidelines has been compiled and peer reviewed by local experts (see the table below).

This year will also see the journal launched on line, increasing accessibility of previous guidelines and journal articles. The journal is published quarterly and all submitted articles are peer reviewed. We are reliant on a steady supply of diverse, good-quality and relevant material, especially as we try to continually

Guideline	Edition	Number
Adult management	July 2000	1
Paediatric management	November 2000	2
TB preventive therapy	February 2001	3
MTCT prevention	May 2001	4
Perinatal HIV diagnosis	August 2001	5
Palliative care	December 2001	6
Opportunistic infection management	March 2002	7
Adult management (1st revision)	June 2002	8
Paediatric management (1st revision)	November 2002	9
Legal and ethical	February 2003	10
Infant testing	May 2003	11
Blood product handling	August 2003	12
Sexual assault,	February 2004	13
TB treatment with ART		
Patient confidentiality	June 2004	14
Pre-ART management	November 2004	15
Adult management (2nd revision)	March 2005	16



improve readability and content into the new year. Any suggestions, contributions or new ideas are welcome!

The second 46664 AIDS awareness concert will be held at Fancourt this month and hopefully with the Hassel-Plattners bankrolling it, it will raise not only awareness but also funds this year. Mr Mandela's enigmatic influence once again sees an impressive line-up of international and national artists contributing to this now annual event hosted by the Nelson Mandela Foundation. My vintage means that some artists are unknown to me, although the ageing rockers that make up Queen are a strong pull for me to invest and find a way to get down to George!

I wonder how different things would have been for this awesome rock band if Freddie Mercury had not been struck down by AIDS at the age of 45. Despite the fact that he was already very ill with HIV he appeared with the Spanish diva Montserrat Caballe at the La Nit Festival and sang the song he had written for Montserrat and Barcelona called 'Barcelona'. That was his last stage performance. Freddie Mercury disclosed his HIV-positive status the day before he died in London in 1991. Following this, his disclosure has been important for HIV awareness, although earlier disclosure might have been even more powerful.

Speaking of great musicians, South Africa can really hold its own. One new and refreshing band that I had the

pleasure of hearing was 'Freshly Ground' at the recent opening of the first dedicated public sector antiretroviral clinic in South Africa, the Hanan-Crusaid Clinic in Gugulethu. They are an 'afro-fusion' band and packed with talent – they had Western Cape's Premier Rasool dancing in such a way that Madiba would have been proud! What a terrific occasion.

Other talent in the news recently has been the South African film industry – Anant Singh's film 'Yesterday' was up for an Oscar. While it unfortunately did not win the foreign film category, it certainly brought the South African HIV epidemic some international coverage. The story is of a young woman in KwaZulu-Natal who discovers she is HIV infected and alone with her child. Her one wish is to live long enough to see her child go to school. The film will be viewed at the South African HIV Conference in Durban – just one of the highlights in a conference that promises lots of interest. If you haven't yet registered for this conference, you should do so! There are more than 5 000 delegates already signed up and it should be a great three days of networking and updates. See you there!

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