

EDITORIAL

The fight against blindness has been given top priority by the World Health Organization. This is aimed at preventing avoidable causes of blindness, especially in disadvantaged population in developing countries like children. Drs Adio and Komolafe highlight the challenges of childhood eye care in Nigeria and point out the deficiency of human and infrastructural capacity for the optimal care of eye diseases in children. They proffer recommendations to halt the current negative trend and advocate the development of sustainable and equitably distributed high quality paediatric eye care services as part of our national health care system.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease (COPD) is one of the most common chronic respiratory diseases which contribute significantly to the burden of non-communicable diseases. With the increasing prevalence of COPD in developing countries a good knowledge of the disease process, the diagnosis and adequate management among physicians is important to ensure appropriate treatment. Dr Umoh in this review discusses the optimal treatment options for patients with COPD in Nigeria.

Hypertension, a known independent and major risk factor for cardiovascular disease which was initially considered to be rare in sub Saharan Africa (SSA), is now a serious endemic threat and an important public health issue. Different studies in SSA have reported higher prevalence of hypertension in urban compared to rural areas. However more recent studies from the rural areas show an increasing pattern in hypertension prevalence. Dr Alikor et al, in a cross sectional study evaluated the prevalence of hypertension and its risk factors in a rural community in Nigeria. They report a hypertension prevalence of 20.2 %, in the rural community studied in addition to a significant

association with established cardiovascular risk factors. They propose the implementation of prevention measures utilising health promotion and education and routine screening among rural communities in Nigeria in the fight against hypertension and other NCDs.

The heart rate (HR) is a determinant of cardiovascular event risk in patients with hypertension. Lamina et al carried out a study aimed at investigating the effect of interval training program on HR in black African subjects with hypertension. Their results revealed a significant effect of exercise training program on HR. They conclude that moderate intensity interval training programs are effective in the non-pharmacological adjunct management of hypertension and may prevent cardiovascular events through the down regulation of HR in hypertension.

Nigeria is one of the countries noted to have made insufficient progress towards the attainment of the health-related MDGs. Experience has however shown that a few cost-effective interventions that can be delivered in resource poor settings, through family/community-level action and schedulable population-oriented services, are able to rapidly attain these goals. This was the basis of the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Week (MNCHW) in Nigeria, designed to achieve rapid population coverage of chosen interventions, within the one week period of the programme. Dr Ordinioha presents the outcome of an evaluation done to assess the effectiveness of the MNCHW week held in Rivers State, in June 2012. He submits that the MNCHW in Rivers State did not meet the stated objectives.

Skin fold parameters can be used to assess body density (BD). Ojoawo et al carried out a study among non-athletic female students at the ObafemiAwolowo University (OAU) Ile Ife,

Nigeria to evaluate this relationship by using hydrostatic weighing (HSW) equipment. They conclude that BD derived by HSW had a significant negative correlation with skinfold thickness at various levels. They recommend that the equation derived from the study is appropriate to determine the BD of Nigerian women.

Medical emergencies are a daily occurrence in medical practice. The profile and outcome medical emergencies are a reflection of the prevailing pattern of disease and the responsiveness of the healthcare system. This study by Akpa et al seeks to evaluate the pattern and outcome of medical emergencies presenting to the university of Port Harcourt teaching hospital (UPTH), Port Harcourt. The authors report that the spectrum of medical emergencies and the pattern of mortality indicate a mixed burden of infective and non-communicable diseases; with cardiovascular and

cerebrovascular diseases and HIV/AIDS related infectious as the most significant contributors. They recommend the development of a more responsive emergency management system to cope with this trend of disease pattern in our emergency rooms and reduce mortality from medical emergencies.

Dr Ibekwe presents the report of a practice audit at the otorhinolaryngological (ORL) unit of the Niger Delta University teaching hospital (NDUTH), Bayelsa Nigeria. This audit was done with the aim of establishing the pattern of ORL disease which is useful for the planning of effective ORL services. She reports a higher prevalence of otologic conditions and concludes that the ORL practice in the centre is basic. She therefore proposes a scale up of human and infrastructural resource at the hospital to elevate the level of practice beyond the current primary and secondary care.