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This is the last issue of the South African Family Practice journal for 2008. Our objective of providing relevant, up-to-date continuing professional development (CPD) articles was realized and we hope to continue with more vigour into the future. In this issue the article on healthy lifestyle interventions in general practice (part 3) by Schweltnus MP *et al* focuses on chronic respiratory disease. It mentions the main indication for referral to a lifestyle intervention program in any symptomatic patient with either chronic obstructive airway (COPD) or any other chronic respiratory disease and who also has limited functional capacity. COPD is a disease that is on the increase in women and there are about 280 million sufferers globally. In predicting the outcome, the BODE index is used which is based on four functional measures namely **B**ody Mass Index, **O**bstruction (FEV1), **D**yspnoea and **E**xercise tolerance (6-minute walk distance). The main elements of the intervention program are smoking cessation, exercise training, education, psychosocial and nutritional support. It concludes that regular monitoring should be conducted during the training sessions and follow-up assessment done every 2-3 months to assess progress and to re-set goals.

The review article on suicide and suicide risk factors by Masango SM, Rataemane ST and Motojesi AA provides a synthesis on the important issues related to suicide and suicide risk that the family practitioner should know. It covers definition, epidemiology, aetiology, biological and demographic factors of suicide. In addition, it provides pragmatic steps for assessing suicide risk and dispels some common myths about the condition. It ends by recommending adequate and continuous training in suicide risk assessment and recognition, treatment of medical emergencies due to attempted suicide and identification of those prone to high-risk suicide behavior.

The ethics article on concepts concerning 'disease' causation, control, and the current cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe by Knapp van Bogaert and Ogunbanjo GA should be read within the context of the current cholera outbreak across the border and the ethical implications of collating numbers of those affected instead of educating the vulnerable on how to prevent the disease. The article opens with historical background on concepts concerning the cause of disease from ancient Mesopotamians, to the Hippocratics and Cartesian revolution. The

Henle-Koch model of germ theory provides insight of knowing that there are agents responsible for many infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, plague, syphilis and cholera. The article goes on further to indicate that from early times until now, those who hold power have usually determined the official response to disease and the powerful in society tend to claim that a disease in question targets only one particular set of people, while others are spared. The issue of societal deviance and deviant behavior are explained noting that those considered as 'deviants' tend to be rejected or shunned to varying degrees by others. It concludes that the media follows the cholera stories, counts the dead, and largely fails to inform the public as to the nature, cause and prevention of cholera.

The last article in the CPD section by Jordaan HF covers the common skin and mucosal disorders in HIV/AIDS. It discusses *Staphylococcus aureus* infection, which is the most common cutaneous and systemic bacterial pathogen in HIV-infected adults, dermatophytoses, candidiasis, herpes simplex infection etc. Most of the disorders discussed are supplemented by photos and these add value to this article. It also discusses adverse drug eruptions, the incidence which is greatly increased in HIV-disease and correlates with the decline and dysregulation of immune function. This incidence of toxic epidermal necrolysis and Stevens-Johnson syndrome is increased in HIV-disease largely due to sulfonamides.

I take this opportunity to thank all the authors who submitted CPD articles published this year for their contributions to the section. The strategy for future issues will be to continue sourcing relevant and interesting CPD articles for our readers. Have a restful and joyous 2008 despite the economic downturn and hope to face the challenges and opportunities of 2009.

NB: Comments on any of the CPD articles will be appreciated

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