

Editor's focus

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation: knowledge of clinicians

In South Africa, it is estimated that asthma affects 20% of school children and, in a study among primary school children in Durban, the prevalence of asthma was reported to be 51.6%. Govender and Gray conducted a cross-sectional survey among primary school teachers at 19 randomly selected primary schools in the Umdoni sub-district of KwaZulu-Natal, with the main objective of assessing their levels of knowledge about asthma and its management. Their findings showed that 38.5% of teachers had limited knowledge of asthma and its management, with only 2.65% having had training in asthma care. In addition, 56.2% believed that an antibiotic and 31% that aspirin are used to relieve an asthma attack. Only about a third knew that swimming is an acceptable and beneficial sport for asthmatic children. This study highlights the fact that the primary school teachers' knowledge of asthma and its management is deficient in many respects, and that there is an urgent need to implement asthma education programmes. The Department of Health's primary health care re-engineering agenda, which includes improvement of school health care, will be the appropriate channel to introduce various educational programmes for primary school teachers. This will empower them to deal with common childhood illnesses within the school environment, in collaboration with the school nurses.

Patients with type 2 diabetes and their difficulties with insulin initiation

The United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study (UKPDS) has shown that early introduction of insulin therapy to treat patients with type 2 diabetes who are poorly controlled on oral medications helps to achieve and maintain adequate glycaemic control. Based on the UKPDS findings, Nadasen and Naidoo conducted an observational, analytical study, in which patients with uncontrolled type 2 diabetes who were on maximum oral therapy at a public health clinic in Durban were studied. The aim was to explore reasons behind the perceived reluctance of the patients to commence insulin therapy. Fifty-nine patients were enrolled, and data of patients willing to initiate insulin were compared with those who refused insulin therapy. The main findings were that 47% had no understanding of insulin therapy, 55% refused insulin therapy and 80% were afraid of the pain associated with insulin injection, which was the main reason for refusal. Although this was a small sample and the findings are not generalisable, this study provides insight into the patients' knowledge level on the management of diabetes,

and further exposes the quality of information provided by primary care physicians to patients on various management options, which include use of insulin for their treatment. To bridge the knowledge gap, patients with diabetes should be made aware of available evidence that supports the use of insulin in uncontrolled type 2 diabetes, and any misconceptions about insulin therapy should be addressed.

Role of *Ubuntu* in families living with mental illness in the community

The word *Ubuntu* has its origins in the Bantu languages of Southern Africa and translates as follows: "I am what I am because of who we all are". It is known that families living with relatives who have mental illness are a vulnerable group in the community. Within the context of *Ubuntu*, people with mental illness should be supported and cared for by their families and communities, rather than being institutionalised. Engelbrecht and Kasiram used the qualitative grounded theory method to discuss research in progress that demonstrates how families with mentally ill patients experience stigma and isolation in the community. Being a qualitative study, the emergent themes highlight the vulnerability of families living with relatives with mental illness in the community, the high levels of burden of care, and the abuse and stigmatisation of people living with mental illness. The question was asked: "Is *Ubuntu* fading?" The authors attempted to provide some answers, which include the notions of neo-liberalism that favour individualism over communalism that underpins *Ubuntu* lifestyles; and high levels of employment and poverty, which make people believe they need to be looked after rather than looking after others. The article explains the central values of *Ubuntu*, namely survival, compassion, respect and dignity, and encourages the reinstatement of these values, to promote the survival and recovery of families living with mental illness in the community. As a nation, we need introspection in our various communities on the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. This article is food for thought, if we are to find common ground among the diverse cultural, religious and racial groups in South Africa.

Prof Gboyega A Ogunbanjo

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2. Nadasen DM, Naidoo M. Patients with type 2 diabetes and difficulties associated with initiation of insulin therapy in a public health clinic in Durban. *S Afr Fam Pract* 2012;54(5):436-440.
3. Engelbrecht C, Kasiram MI. The role of *Ubuntu* in families living with mental illness in the community. *S Afr Fam Pract* 2012;54(5):441-446.