

From the Editor-in-Chief Table

You are welcome to the Second Edition of Nigerian Journal of Health Sciences as an Open Access Publication. The current issue of the journal, like the immediate past issue, publishes articles that cover areas of Basic Medical Sciences, Laboratory Sciences, Clinical Practice, Community and Public Health. The articles are listed under original research articles, a review article, a case report and a letter to the editor. The papers address topical issues that are important to medical practice in the developing world.

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of the contribution of body fat to body weight. Based on World Health Organization BMI standards, individuals are generally classified into four major categories of underweight, normal, overweight and obese. Obesity is associated with increased morbidity and mortality. Various regions of the world have populations with different ethnic groups with distinct genetic constitutions that are influenced by environmental factors. There are therefore differences in physiological responses to the accumulation of fat storage by different ethnic groups in different parts of the world. Evidence in support of this are the facts that the BMI and body fat accumulation differs among different ethnic groups. There is, therefore, the need for more regional specific standards of BMI. There have been little or no data on the BMI cutoff points for the indigenous Africans. Although more are needed, the first paper published in this edition by Ogunlade *et al.* is a landmark in that direction. Read and find out what the 'Ife BMI criteria for young adults' is about; and what risk group you belong.

Sickle cell anaemia (SCA) is the most common sickle cell disease in Nigeria. The severity of the disease varies between individuals even within the same family. The need for the parameter(s) to use to identify individuals at increased risk of morbidity and mortality has always posed a challenge, especially in the developing countries. Studies showed that in the developed countries serum lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) levels significantly correlate with clinical severity of the disease. Observations from this study by Adefehinti *et al.* showed that plasma LDH correlated positively and significantly with clinical severity score in Nigerian children with SCA in steady state. The consistency of the relationship between LDH levels and clinical severity scores worldwide among people with clinical, genetic and environmental diversities suggests

that plasma LDH may be a reliable indicator of severity of SCA disease in children if measured in the steady state. The big question is how readily available and how affordable is the cost of the test when needed?

Donated blood is lifesaving for individuals who have lost large volumes of blood from serious accidents; and many diverse surgical and medical conditions. The major challenge in developing countries like Nigeria is how to get safe blood in adequate supply. Udegbe *et al.* examined the knowledge, attitude and practice of voluntary blood donation among residents in a rural community. Although the respondents demonstrated adequate knowledge about blood donation with a positive attitude towards blood donation, the health authorities need to collaborate with the rural communities by organising blood donation campaigns to provide opportunities for altruistic blood donation. This information should be of interest for those involved in recruiting blood donors.

Ogunfowokan and Fajemilehin studied sexual abuse of adolescent girls, a serious social menace that transcends racial, economic, social and religious circles; a social menace that is on the increase or so it seems. Will this social menace ever end since the factors that perpetrate it are inherent in the settings of every act of sexual abuse? Read the paper to find out.

The paper by Kuti and Oyelami had a new look at an old problem – childhood pneumonia which is one of the leading causes of under-five morbidity and mortality globally. The highest burden of childhood pneumonia is found in the developing countries with Nigeria second only to India. The authors outlined the risk factors and features that are associated with poor outcome. They, therefore, recommended that these features should be meticulously looked for and aggressively managed to improve on the current survival rate among under-five children presenting with pneumonia.

As the world population inevitably moves towards a more aging population, Parkinson's disease (PD), which is one of the neurological disorders of the aging population, will increasingly become one of the major health problems. The reviews paper by Kaptan *et al.* discusses extensively on the dilemma for the proper and suitable approach for treatment in time scale and what should be the future approach to the management of patients with PD from the onset of the illness.

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Editorial

Finally, but very important, I am glad to continue to announce that the Nigerian Journal of Health Sciences is now an Open Access, Peer-reviewed International Journal. It is available as both an online publication and in printed copies. This has greatly enhanced the visibility of the journal in addition to the other benefits associated with being an open access journal. Articles should be submitted through the website of the journal. Online submission is currently free. All submitted manuscripts would be handled electronically. This should reduce the turn-around time for manuscripts.

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