

# Acclimatising to COVID-19

The AHJ January issue comes at a time when the world is starting to acclimatise to the long-term effects of the pandemic. All sectors have been affected by the pandemic with health top on the list.

The opinion focuses on women's health, highlighting the important role women play in the continuity of humanity while facing the challenges of conception, pregnancy and childbirth. At the same time, women also have unique pathologies like tumours affecting the uterus and cervix, ovaries and breasts, while ageing in women comes with post-menopausal disorders and decalcified, fragile bones.

The issue tackles safe abortion, reproductive decision-making and breast imaging. Dr Kihara Anne discusses abortions and recommends a holistic approach to health and well-being by addressing girls' and women's public and social health with sexual reproductive health and rights commencing even before puberty. This is followed by an article by Saheed Akinmayowa Lawal et al on Reproductive Decision Making (RDM). They argue that the RDM process in sub-Saharan Africa during the pandemic may differ significantly from before considering the limited supply of and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, and the possibility of a largescale reproductive health crisis in the region. They advocate more studies to explore the changing nature of SRH decision-making. A feature on Uganda is presented by Zeridah Muyinda et al describing the progress made in breast imaging. Breast cancer is the third commonest cancer in women in Uganda and the leading cancer in women globally. The team highlights

the progress made in early diagnosis and how teams are working together to make diagnosis better.

Three conferences are reported, including the International Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation in Population and Development. The conference deliberated on the relevance of South-to-South and triangular Cooperation in a post-COVID context and made important recommendations. The second conference is the World Health Assembly, which agreed to start drafting a global pandemic agreement in a bid to protect the world from future infectious diseases crises. The third is the World AIDS day with the theme, 'End inequalities. End AIDS. End pandemics'. The meeting noted that the world is not on track to meet the global commitment to end AIDS by 2030 and that progress is under even greater strain as the COVID-19 crisis disrupts HIV prevention and treatment services, schooling, violence prevention programmes and more. All these conferences have a virtual component bringing closer the effect COVID-19 has had on how the world operates.

In another article, Kevin A. Klock et al highlight the importance of an improved worldwide health security strategy that puts global mechanisms in place to complement effective regional, national and sub-national approaches. This links well with the World AIDs Day theme on ending inequities showing the importance of all these global, regional and national bodies working together. This is supplemented by Oyewale Tomori's article on global health security.

Malaria is still a challenge in many tropical areas of the world. Colleagues from Symex Ltd, a global leader in the design and development of clinical diagnostics, writes about the malaria cycle, including the global arena cycle,

its actual parasitic cycle, and proposes strategies to combat it using new technologies that are a promising and positive step in the right direction. 42 Technology Partnership reports on how it has helped inform WHO review its guidelines on diagnosing childhood TB using stool as the primary sample for initial diagnostic TB tests in children up to 10 years old.

The Infectious Diseases Institute follows up its article in the October issue by further reflecting on the first 20 years of IDI in Uganda, highlighting its governance, systems and approach to sustainability, as well as the energy, drive and dedication of IDI staff and how this has led to strengthened trust in the institution. This is an important article that highlights that African institutions have the capability to gain trust and carry out programmes to support communities.

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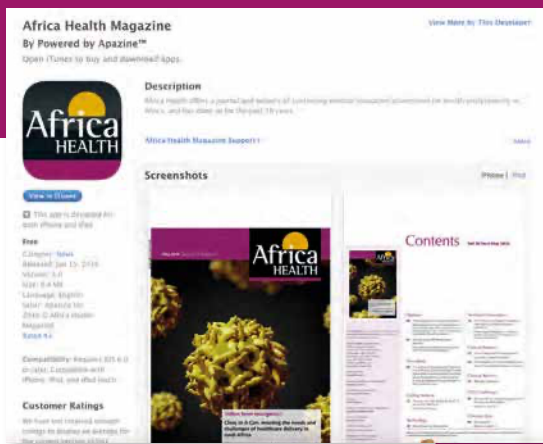
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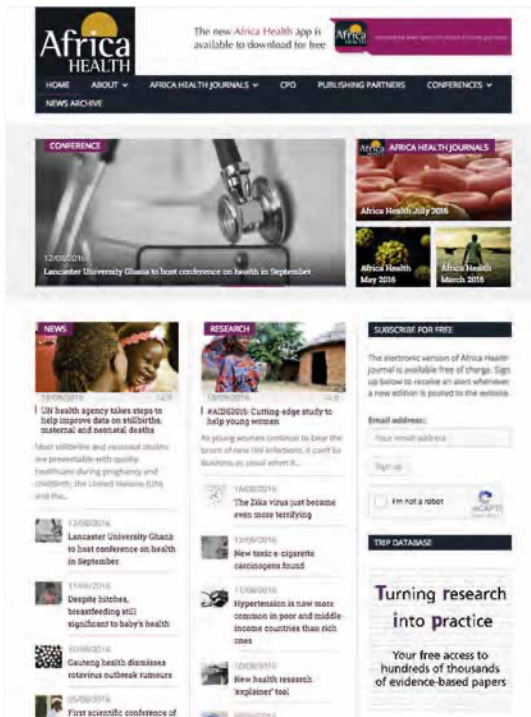
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