A Diverse Collection of Articles

Welcome to the April issue of the African Health Journal (AHJ), where we present a diverse collection of articles addressing crucial health challenges and advancements across the continent. This issue spans topics from health workforce issues debilitating diseases to the evolving landscape of surgery in Africa and innovations in health professions education.

The opinion by Francis Omaswa kicks off this issue by reporting on the WHO African Region Inaugural Africa Health Workforce Forum 6 - 8 May, 2024 which was convened in Windhoek, Namibia. The event marked the launch of the African Health Workforce Investment Charter, aiming to address the continent's significant health workforce shortage. The Charter sets a goal to halve Africa's 6.1 million health worker deficit by 2030 by mobilizing and aligning domestic and partner funding. The forum was attended by Ministers, representatives from governments and key stakeholders across the education, finance, health, labour and public service sectors. The forum emphasized the need for sustainable investment in health workforce education, employment, and retention, particularly in underserved regions.

Dr. Omer El Nagieb offers a comprehensive overview of Occupational Health (OH) in Africa, defining it as the protection of the health of the working population. He highlights several persistent challenges, including limited access, a shortage of professionals, and a lack of supportive frameworks. Despite these obstacles, Dr. El Nagieb identifies numerous opportunities for improvement, such as capacity building through training, strengthening legislation and enforcement, investing in OH infrastructure, fostering collaboration and partnerships, and enhancing research and data collection. He concludes that improving occupational health outcomes is not only achievable but essential for sustainable development on the continent.

Taofik Oloruko-Oba provides an in-depth look at cervical cancer in Kenya, emphasizing the potential for its eradication in Africa. He notes that most cervical cancer cases and deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, many of which are in Africa. Oloruko-Oba discusses the efforts underway in Kenya, including guidelines developed by the Ministry of Health, and highlights the challenges faced by rural Kenyan women in accessing the HPV vaccine or a Pap smear. This underscores the urgent need for action to protect African women from this preventable disease.

An article on surgery in Sierra Leone features Dr. Austin Demby, the country's Minister of Health, speaking at the 64th Annual West African College of Surgeons Conference. He emphasized the urgent need for equitable access to safe, affordable surgical and anesthetic care in West Africa. With only 15 residents and a handful of surgeons serving a population of eight million, the Ministry of Health is committed to transforming healthcare by increasing the number of surgeons, enhancing community health officers' skills, and improving surgical education. Collaborations with organizations like Mercy Ships and hosting over 700 surgeons highlight efforts to build a robust, self-sufficient healthcare system for national development.

Three subsequent articles delve into the importance of collaborations and partnerships in enhancing health professions education across various fields. The first article covers the Consortium of Universities of Global Health (CUGH) annual conference, held in Los Angeles, California. With the theme "Global Health without Borders: Acting for Impact," it features a panel by the African Forum for Education and Research in Health (AFREhealth) titled "Building a Resilient Global Health Workforce: Training for the Challenges." Two AFREhealth leaders were recognized for their contributions to Global Health Leadership at this conference.

Brian Agaba's article highlights Seed Global Health's efforts to develop emergency medical services in Uganda through a unique three-pronged approach: strengthening education, practice, and policy. The third article by Quentin covers a meeting in Namibia attended by several new medical schools in Africa under the Consortium of New Sub-Saharan African Medical Schools (CONSAMS). This meeting provided a platform for delegates to network, share best practices, and learn from each other's experiences.

The next is an article by a team of ophthalmologists discuss glaucoma, the silent thief of sight, due to its painless nature of irreversible vision loss. They provide insights into its risk factors, etiology, diagnosis, and treatment, raising awareness about this critical condition.

Another highlight is an article from a team at the University of Global Health Equity in Rwanda. They describe their multidisciplinary and interprofessional work in surgical education, clinical care, research, policy, advocacy, innovation, and global collaboration. Their efforts emphasize the importance of prioritizing surgical care as a vital component of the health system.

Our usual medicine digest and quiz are included, along with plenty of news and advertisements. The AHJ is available online as an open-access web-based publication at Africa-health.com. This website is updated daily, sharing current affairs and engaging through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, drawing a large audience. Those interested in advertising are welcome to utilize both the print and electronic channels of the AHJ, following the guidelines provided in the journal.

We hope this issue provides valuable insights and inspires continued progress in addressing the health challenges facing Africa.



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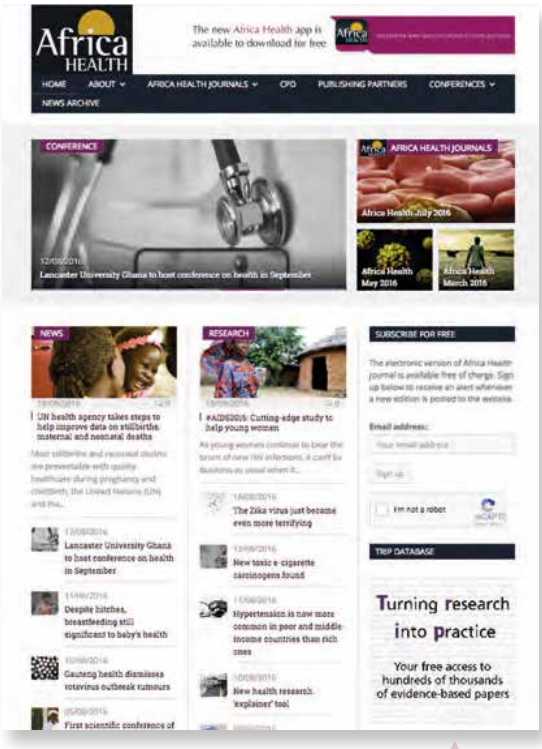
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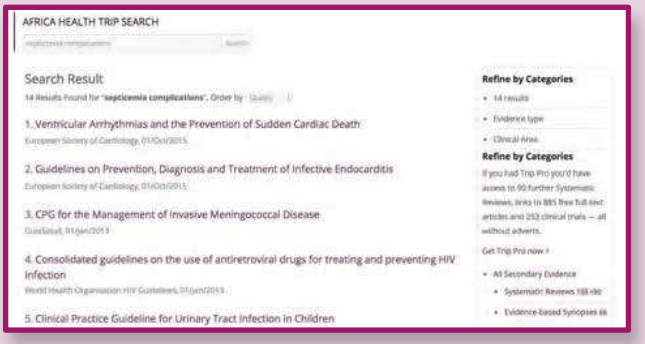
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