

MSSVD

Report of the Honorary Secretary to the 79th annual meeting of MSSVD held at the Royal Society of Medicine, Friday 27 October 2000

My final year as Honorary Secretary to MSSVD is now drawing to a close. The final challenge I set myself is to have circulated a summary of the main activities of the society including accounts and financial report in advance of the annual general meeting. It has required the hard work of the officers of the society, the secretariat and finance department at the RSM, and Graham Tomlinson, charitable governance adviser. The annual report was printed in November and circulated to members.

There are now 657 UK members of the society, with 101 overseas members and 31 honorary life members, 21 of whom are resident in the United Kingdom. There were 62 new members last year, of which 34 were nurses and health advisers. There are a number of MSSVD members to whom we paid tribute. These included Dr Ratnatunga; Dr Seaman; Dr George Csonka; Dr Christine Bakshi; Dr T Reed; Dr Andrew Crooks.

January 21 was a particularly sad occasion for the society when Maggie Godley sadly died following her two year illness. She will be remembered for all the work she put into running both MSSVD and AGUM and for her care and support as a fellow human being. Her husband has agreed to a memorial, which will be in the form of a prize given to the best presentation from a district general hospital consultant at MSSVD Spring meetings.

The past year has seen an even more rapid pace of change resulting in the Honorary Secretary having difficulty keeping her head above water. Some major issues for the society have been identified.

The first of these is a review and implementation of the changes to the charitable governance of MSSVD. As incoming treasurer, Simon Barton investigated the duties and role of the Honorary Treasurer and after discussion with the officers, it was agreed that expert assistance would be required to undertake a comprehensive review of the society's position. Mr Graham Tomlinson was appointed as an external consultant to support the officers, resulting in the clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the officers, council, and trustees of the charity. Clearer mechanisms for decision making, strategy, and development of business plans are in place for the future. The charitable governance review will continue next year with his support. The Honorary Secretary and treasurer together with Mr Tomlinson have been developing an appropriate contract with the RSM to provide infrastructure and support services for the running of the society and refinement of the membership database. The contract will include a specification for secretarial and financial services, lines of accountability, an arrangement with the society for housing and lending of the MSSVD library books, and support for educational activities.

Educational initiatives

The Education Sub-Committee met on five occasions. Following discussion at the Education Sub-Committee, it was agreed that in 2000-1, one of the ordinary general meetings' format would be altered to take into account adult learning theory; the meeting will be in March 2001 and run by the HPV Special Interest Group. The "Induction training steering group" has achieved its objective of producing an educational package suitable for non-consultant career grade doctors starting in the specialty and this will be launched at the start of this academic year. A skills course "Teaching the teachers" has been developed by the education officer Dr Jonathan Cartledge and education coordinator Sarah Chippindale, which will take place in November. Dr Jonathan Cartledge has completed his term of office as education officer and relinquished his post in December 2000. Sarah Chippindale was coopted from her post as academic health adviser at Mortimer Market Centre and returned to her full time post in December 2000. On behalf of MSSVD members, I would like to thank them for challenging the education subcommittee with new ideas and engendering a critical look at our education and meeting programme. The future of further educational initiatives and support structures required to deliver these will be a priority for this coming year.

The website has become an integral part of delivery of education to members of MSSVD. The OGM meetings are now summarised and reported on the website. This initiative will be developed in the future as information technology at the RSM changes. There may be an opportunity to provide more webcasting similar to that undertaken at the MSSVD Spring meeting, in Baltimore.

CME/CPD

A major change for doctors over the next 2 years will be the introduction of revalidation. The royal colleges have been working together with the GMC to coordinate the requirements for revalidation. The Royal College of Physicians has formalised a CME/CPD committee following meetings between CME regional representatives and specialist societies. CME/CPD requirements will change and some assessment measures will be introduced. All doctors will be required to undertake CME/CPD and this will have substantial effects on clinics employing NCCG colleagues. MSSVD as a specialist society will be devising appropriate CME for its members in liaison with the RCP.

Meetings

Five ordinary general meetings were held in the Barnes Hall at the Royal Society of Medicine. The topics highlighted important advances in diagnosis and management. There were key strategic issues for the specialty raised particularly in relation to medicolegal aspects and the needs of adolescents. The "Doctors in training" presentation meeting, which gives opportunity for practising presentation skills, showed that our trainees continued to perform to a high standard. The prize was awarded to Dr Nelson David, for his presentation on "Zoon's balanitis."

MSSVD was host society for the Federation of Infection society meeting held in Manchester on 1-3 December 1999. This is the first time that the meeting has coincided with the World AIDS day. The meeting was very successful with the highest number of

registrants recorded. Consequently, the VAT bill was larger than usual and the term "success" was confined to educational and social rather than financial! The debate trio of Drs Simon Barton, Colm O'Mahony, and Dolores Hooker provided eye opening entertainment for our more reserved colleagues in other infection disciplines.

MSSVD continues to provide meetings in conjunction with other societies. These have included the SSSTDA/IUSTI meeting held in Sun City, South Africa, and the joint BHIVA/MSSVD held on 8 October 1999. The MSSVD/ASTDA inaugural meeting was a resounding success. The society has been asked by the Section of Dermatology at the RSM to develop a joint meeting, which will take place on 8 June 2001.

NCCG meeting

The MSSVD NCCG meeting organised by Dr Jonathan Ross took place in September and was well received.

MSSVD National Continuing Professional Development course in GU Medicine/HIV/AIDS

This year the MSSVD took over the running of the course, previously known as BPMF, latterly the CPD course run by University College, London. The steering group is chaired by Dr Jackie Sherrard. This is a new and challenging venture for the society. The aim will be to offer a reduced price for MSSVD members on courses arranged by MSSVD. There has also been discussion about the need for a more basic course directed at primary care physicians, healthcare workers working in contraceptive services, and others providing sexual health services to complement the DFFP run by the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care (FFPRHC). Over the next year a core curriculum will be developed and the course piloted. The intention is to deliver this on a regional basis.

Special interest groups

The six special interest groups have submitted business plans to the treasurer for their educational activities for 2000-1. A proposal for a further special interest group of "Adolescent sexual health" has been accepted by council and will be submitting a business plan.

Doctors in training meeting

Last year the meeting was held in the president's home city of Sheffield. Although the standard of hotels fell short of expectations, the scientific programme was well received and the skill workshops of personal image and communication skills provided direction to the consultants of tomorrow. The local cabaret of Karen Rogstad, David Daniels, Mary Stevenson, and Stephen Green, infectious disease consultant at Sheffield, entertained us on Saturday evening. Pfizer kindly sponsored the event.

MSSVD undergraduate prize

This was awarded as follows: clinical prize to Dr Daniel Jary, "Why do young people still catch STDs?"

Other MSSVD activities

The changes in provision of medical care driven by government have made a significant impact on the day to day activities of all healthcare workers. Key issues that have been discussed at council have included charitable

governance, funding of sexual health services, BMA AIDS foundation, "Access to clinics" report for CMO, liaison with FFPRHC, and reciprocal CME.

The Sexual Health and HIV Strategy due to report in early 2001 may have a significant impact on services providing sexual health care. The challenge for our specialty is to be at the forefront of these changes, being part of the broader picture and outward looking into the communities which we serve, in contrast to a more passive approach of waiting for the "at-risk" population to come to us. This requires a critical look at the way services are provided at present and opportunities for providing them in a more efficient way. Our strengths, particularly with regard to health promotion, partner notification, accessibility and skills in communicating with young people, need to be increased and marketed. We are fortunate to have at the helm of MSSVD an extremely proactive president with strategic vision and a grip on operational aspects of running sexual health services. I am delighted that the work which has been undertaken over the 4 years since I have been Honorary Secretary will continue, be refined, and changed according to political imperatives and the needs of people accessing our services. I wish Keith Radcliffe as my successor good fortune and thank him and the treasurer and president for all the help and encouragement that they have proffered over the last year.

Finally, my thanks to all fellows and members for their continuing support to the MSSVD and to me personally over these past 4 years.

ANGELA J ROBINSON
Honorary Secretary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Papulonecrotic tuberculide of the glans penis

EDITOR,—A 27 year old promiscuous, married man presented with recurrent episodes of ulceration of the penis of 12 years' duration. Each episode began with a painful small raised lesion which got ulcerated and finally healed spontaneously in 2–3 months. The present episode of painful ulceration had been lasting for 6 months or so. In spite of various treatments received from various private practitioners, his genital sore did not respond.

On physical examination, this moderately nourished individual had a single well defined ulcer on the glans penis near the urethral meatus, measuring 8 × 5 mm. The edge of the ulcer was undermined and its floor had necrotic slough. The ulcer had perforated deeply into the urethra, resulting in dribbling of urine through it (fig 1). Multiple puckered scars over the glans penis circumferentially, just distal to the coronal sulcus, were evidence of previous episodes of similar ulcerations. The inguinal lymph nodes were not significantly enlarged. His systemic examination was unremarkable.



Figure 1 Glans penis showing both ulcer and puckered scarring.

The haemogram revealed a raised erythrocyte sedimentation rate (64 mm in the first hour). The Mantoux test was strongly positive (20 × 20 mm). VDRL and HIV serology was non-reactive. Radiological investigations did not demonstrate any focus of tuberculosis in the chest or genitourinary system. Smear and culture of discharge from the ulcer and also of urine for acid fast bacilli were negative. Histopathological examination of the ulcer (glans penis) revealed ulcerated epidermis. In the deep dermis, by the side of the ulceration, there were caseating tuberculous granulomas along with perivascular inflammatory infiltrate with vessel wall thickening and endothelial cells swelling. Fite's stain for acid fast bacilli was negative. These features were consistent with the diagnosis of papulonecrotic tuberculide. The patient was treated with a four drug regimen for antituberculous therapy to which he responded favourably. At the end of 2 months, the ulcer had healed completely.

Even though it is considered to be rare, tuberculosis of the penis may manifest as primary, secondary, or papulonecrotic tuberculide type.^{1–4} Clinically, it may present as superficial ulcers of the penis or tuberculous cavernositis.² Papulonecrotic tuberculide, a form of cutaneous tuberculosis, represents an allergic reaction to bursts of antigens reaching highly immune skin following haematogenous spread from an internal focus. The tuberculous focus is often not clinically active at the time of eruption⁵ as seen in our case. The diagnosis of papulonecrotic tuberculide in our case was based on the well laid down criteria.^{3,4}

Papulonecrotic tuberculides are mostly extragenital, but rarely genitalia may be involved.³ Sometimes, the glans penis alone may be involved as in our patient and then diagnosis becomes difficult. Under these circumstances, it needs to be differentiated from atypical soft sore, syphilis, recurrent herpes simplex, and malignant ulcer.⁴ The diagnosis of such cases rests on biopsy, tuberculin testing and, in doubtful cases, a therapeutic test is usually decisive.^{1–4} The possibility of tuberculosis as a cause of chronic ulcer on the penis has to be kept in mind especially in countries like India, where tuberculosis is still prevalent.

Table 1 Mean total and subscale scores for Attitudes to Lesbian and Gay Men (ATLG) Questionnaire

	Male (n=86)	Female (n=123)	p Value
ATLG mean (range)	69.0 (20–176)	56.0 (20–142)	0.003
ATG* mean (range)	40.9 (10–90)	31.8 (10–62)	<0.001
ATL† mean (range)	28.4 (10–90)	24.2 (10–80)	0.03

*ATG = Attitudes to Gay Men.

†ATL = Attitudes to Lesbians.

Contributors: MV wrote the manuscript; DMT was involved in planning and execution of the manuscript; PKK took part in the management of the case and literature search

M VIJAIKUMAR
DEVINDER MOHAN THAPPA
P K KAVIARASAN

Department of Dermatology and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Pondicherry - 605 006, India

Correspondence to: Dr Devinder Mohan Thappa
dmthappa@satyam.net.in
dmthappa@hotmail.com
dmthappa@yahoo.com

- 1 Agarwalla B, Mohanty GP, Sahu LK, et al. Tuberculosis of the penis: report of 2 cases. *J Urol* 1980;124:927.
- 2 Venkataramaiah NR, Van Raalte JA, Dutta SN. Tuberculous ulcer of the penis. *Postgrad Med J* 1982;58:59–60.
- 3 Gawkrödger DJ. Mycobacterial infections. In: Champion RH, Burton JL, Burns DA, et al, eds. *Rook/Wilkinson/Ebling textbook of dermatology*. Vol 2. 6th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Science, 1998:1181–214.
- 4 Jayakumar W, Ganesh R, Ram MSM, et al. Papulonecrotic tuberculids of the glans penis: case report. *Genitourin Med* 1988;64:130–2.
- 5 Harhap M. Tuberculosis of the skin. *Int J Dermatol* 1983;22:542–5.

Accepted for publication 14 November 2000

Attitudes to lesbians and homosexual men: medical students care

EDITOR,—We read with interest the article by Fethers and colleagues on STIs and risk behaviours in women who have sex with women (WSW) and the accompanying editorial by Marrazzo.^{1,2} It is gratifying to see our own results³ replicated in a larger and more complete study. Marrazzo highlights many of the methodological difficulties and deficiencies in research into WSW and comments specifically on "lack of interest" or homophobia contributing to the paucity of interest into STI risk among WSWs. Homophobia is recognised as a barrier to accessing health care.⁴ We wish to report encouraging attitudes among the majority of medical students but forewarn colleagues of the potential for difficulties with attitudes in a minority of medical students.

Over the past 3 years we have administered the "Attitudes to lesbians and gay men" questionnaire³ to final year medical students at St Bartholomew's and the London Medical School as part of core teaching on "sexuality and sexual health," in order to promote discussion. This consists of two 10 item subscales for assessing heterosexual attitudes to homosexual men and lesbians. The 20 statements are presented in Likert format with a nine point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," therefore scores range from 20 (extremely positive attitudes) to 180 (extremely negative attitudes). We have analysed the responses to 217 questionnaires: 41% of the sample were male and the median age was 23 (range 21–34 years). The

results are presented in table 1. The majority of the sample displayed positive attitudes to lesbians and homosexual men with female students exhibiting statistically more positive views especially in relation to homosexual men. However, a significant minority of men (11.8%) exhibited extremely negative attitudes to homosexual men.

We are encouraged by these results which are contrary to much of the published data on attitudes among physicians, nurses, and medical and non-medical students. However, we must continue to challenge negative attitudes as studies show that teaching and promoting tolerance can result in change.⁶ Otherwise difficulties with disclosure in medical settings will continue to impact on provision of health care to WSW and homosexual men and further hamper research in this area.

C J SKINNER
P C HENSHAW
J A PETRAK

Infection and Immunity, Barts and the London NHS Trust, London E1 1BB, UK

- 1 Fethers K, Marks C, Mindel A, *et al*. Sexually transmitted infections and risk behaviours in women who have sex with women. *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:345–50.
- 2 Marrazzo J. Sexually transmitted infections in women who have sex with women: who cares? *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:330–2.
- 3 Skinner CJ, Stokes J, Kavanagh J, *et al*. A case-controlled study of sexual health needs of lesbians. *Gentourin Med* 1996;72:277–80.
- 4 Lesbian health and homophobia: perspectives for the treating obstetrician/gynaecologist. *Curr Probl Obstet Gynaecol Fertil* 1995;18:93–133.
- 5 Greene B, Herek GM, eds. Assessing heterosexuals' attitudes to ward lesbians and gay men. In: *Lesbian and gay psychology: theory, research and clinical application*. London: Sage, 1994.
- 6 Wallick MM, Cambre KM, Townsend MH. Influence of a freshmen-year panel presentation on medical students' attitudes toward homosexuality. *Acad Med* 1995;70:939–41.

Accepted for publication 13 December 2000

Questionnaires and postal research: more than just high response rates

EDITOR,—In the recent editorial by Bates and Rogstad¹ the authors describe the problems associated with conducting postal research including response rates, use of incentives, bias, mailing clinical specimens, and ethical issues. We would like to add that there are other important issues to consider when undertaking questionnaire research.

The effectiveness of incentives to increase response rates remains controversial. Kalantar and Talley² recommend using a lottery incentive as it increases response rates after the first mailing. However, differences between groups were not large, and decreased during follow up and disappeared by the fourth mailing. Koloski *et al*³ found that the use of lottery tickets increase response rates, but may be limited when using them with long questionnaires (32 pages). Moreover, they compared the length of questionnaire (28 *v* 32 pages) which, while being different, did not reach statistical significance.

The most important aspect of postal research is the questionnaire itself! While high response rates are desirable, it is critical that the information provided by participants is of high quality. The quality of the data may differ between short and long questionnaires and to our knowledge this has never been validated. When participants fill out a long questionnaire they may rush or mark incorrect responses purely because they have lost

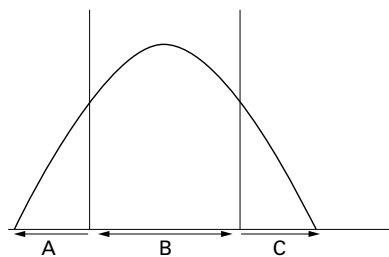


Figure 1 A theoretical model of how response rate may perform according to questionnaire length

interest because of the length of the questionnaire. Conversely, if a questionnaire is too short, it may be deemed “unimportant” and not worth completing.

The real question is, is there any real difference in the size of the length of the questionnaires used in this study? In comparison with a four or 10 page questionnaire they are still long. Studies are lacking which highlight the threshold or optimal length of questionnaires.

Figure 1 shows a theoretical model of how response rate may perform according to questionnaire length. Part A represents low response rates due to questionnaires of short length; part B is the optimal questionnaire length giving the best response rate; and part C shows the poor response rate due to questionnaires of excessive length.

The presentation of the questionnaires will also influence the response rates to postal surveys. Questionnaires that are professionally printed and designed are more likely to be taken seriously by participants compared with two pages stapled together.

Other reasons for an increased response rate include the importance of assuring participants of their confidentiality and this can be improved even further if the steps taken to keep subject data confidential is explained. Respondents may want or expect their answers to be treated strictly in confidence, especially if the topic area is threatening or embarrassing. The researcher should not promise greater confidentiality than he/she can provide remembering that coders and data processors may have access to the information.

Ethics of repeated follow ups is of concern. Some individuals do not like receiving multiple mailouts and this can be a problem if they complain. The respondents' privacy and dignity should be respected. A dilemma may sometimes arise when the need for the researcher to obtain the “informed” consent of respondents conflicts with the need for respondents not to know so much that the results are biased.

One thing is certain; the greater the number of follow ups completed the higher the response rate will be. There can be problems associated with undertaking multiple follow ups, particularly when individuals complain about the number of letters and/or questionnaires they receive. However, this can easily be solved by stating on the initial cover letter if they do not wish to be contacted further, to contact the researchers and tell them so they can be removed from the mailing list. By using some of these techniques researchers should be able to obtain increased response rates and higher quality questionnaire data.

GUY D ESLICK
STUART C HOWELL

Department of Medicine, The University of Sydney, Nepean Hospital, Clinical Sciences Building, PO Box 63, Penrith, NSW 2751, Australia

Correspondence to: Guy D Eslick
eslickg@med.usyd.edu.au

- 1 Bates SM, Rogstad KE. Postal research: too many problems. *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:332–4.
- 2 Kalantar JS, Talley NJ. The effects of lottery incentive and length of questionnaire on health survey and response rates: a randomized study. *J Clin Epidemiol* 1999;52:1117–22.
- 3 Koloski NA, Talley NJ, Boyce PM, *et al*. The effects of questionnaire length and lottery ticket inducement on the response rates in mail surveys. *Psychol Health* 2001;(in press).

Accepted for publication 13 December 2000

Genital herpes may mask underlying neoplasia

EDITOR,—Lesions that fail to heal despite appropriate therapy should always be biopsied to look for an underlying diagnosis. We have seen a 44 year old woman who presented with genital ulceration and lichen sclerosis and was culture positive for herpes simplex virus (HSV) type 1. After treatment with two courses of oral aciclovir there was some reduction in ulceration and resolution of symptoms. However, in view of the persisting solitary ulcer and the presence of lichen sclerosis (fig 1) a biopsy was performed. Histology was reported as showing poorly differentiated invasive squamous cell carcinoma with vulval dystrophy but no features of wart virus infection. She was promptly referred to the gynaecological oncology department where local radiotherapy and chemotherapy were the initial treatments of choice as the tumour extended close to the anal margin. The immediate response was encouraging but subsequently vaginal adhesions and difficulty with micturition developed. A pelvic CT scan showed bilateral inguinal node involvement (fig 2). Radical block dissection was subsequently performed but lymphoedema and local skin nodules developed and she died 2 years after diagnosis.



Figure 1 Appearance of the vulva—ulceration remains despite therapy for HSV. Note white plaques, small haemorrhages, and labial resorption typical of lichen sclerosis.



Figure 2 Pelvic CT scan showing bilateral inguinal lymphadenopathy.

Vulval cancer accounts for 3–5% of female genital tract malignancies. Risk factors include lichen sclerosus, vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia, and infection with oncogenic human papillomavirus (HPV) types.¹ STDs other than HPV are also associated with an increase in the risk of developing vulval neoplasia.² The presence of antibodies to HSV type 2 has been implicated as a risk for cervical pathology³ but a role for HSV in vulval neoplasia is unclear. Vulval basal cell carcinoma presenting as culture negative genital herpes has been reported.⁴ In our case the carcinoma was culture positive for HSV; this may have been due to new infection or to reactivation of pre-existing HSV in the presence of malignancy. This case highlights the need for biopsy of herpetic lesions which fail to respond to standard therapy.

T GREEN
K E ROGSTAD

Department of Genitourinary Medicine,
Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Glossop Road,
Sheffield S10 2JF, UK

M E L PATERSON

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
Northern General Hospital NHS Trust, Herries Road,
Sheffield S5 7AU

Correspondence to: Dr Rogstad

- 1 Edwards CL, Tortolero-Luna G, Linares AC, et al. Vulvar intraepithelial neoplasia and vulvar cancer. *Obstet Gynecol Clin N Am* 1996;23:295–324.
- 2 Trimble CL, Hildesheim A, Brinton LA, et al. Heterogeneous etiology of squamous carcinoma of the vulva. *Obstet Gynaecol* 1996;87:59–64.
- 3 Daling JR, Madeleine MM, McKnight B, et al. The relationship of human papillomavirus-related cervical tumours to cigarette smoking, oral contraceptive use, and prior herpes simplex virus type 2 infection. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prevention* 1996;5:541–8.
- 4 Sherrard J, Bowen ML. Vulvar carcinoma presenting as “recurrent herpes”. *Int J STD AIDS* 1998;9:237.

Accepted for publication 12 January 2001

Sexually shared infections

EDITOR,—Those who have spent some time in genitourinary medicine will surely agree that the specialty has gone through vast changes over the years. Not only the nomenclature of our clinics from VD clinics or special clinics to psychosexual health departments but also the name of our specialty itself has gone through a metamorphosis.

I was therefore interested to note the term “sexually shared infections” suggested by Hopwood *et al*¹ and wondered what message it would project to our patients, sorry our “clients.” Hence, I decided to test this new term in my clinic and would like to share the results with the readers of *STI*.

Firstly, I saw a young girl who had primary presentation of genital warts. I suggested that she might have “shared” this infection with her partner to which she replied, “Look doctor, I know HE gave it to me because he is the one who was sleeping around.”

The next one was a young man who presented with acute gonorrhoea. When I said he might have shared this infection with the one night stand he had in Manchester he replied, “Look doctor, I am no fool. I was so drunk that night that I couldn’t perform but she went ahead anyway then this happened.”

The third one was a chlamydia reinfection. The young girl was found to be positive and received a single dose regimen. Her boyfriend was referred to a GUM clinic but by the time he attended they had had protected sex but the condom split and the girl was reinfected. When I mentioned the “shared” element she fumed, “It was him who gave me this in the first place and he wouldn’t get treatment himself because he felt OK.”

English is not my first language but I always thought that you “share” something that is nice. Like sharing the tender moments, sharing your cake, British Airways share offer when it floated on stock market, etc.

Sharing an STI to me sounds a bit awkward.

In my opinion people transmit the infections knowingly or unknowingly because of their high risk sexual behaviour. It does not matter if we try to play this down and make it acceptable. There always will be some stigma attached to STIs but we should ensure awareness, patient education, and partner notification. I believe this should be done by professionals in a confidential setting in a genitourinary medicine clinic. Changing the terminology about the mode of transmission will not eliminate the stigma attached to STIs but the more open we are about infections the better it will be for our patients.

RAVI GOKHALE

Department of Genitourinary Medicine, Arrove Park Hospital, Upton, Wirral, CH49 5PE, UK

- 1 Hopwood J, Mallinson H, Wellsted S. Canary to sparrow; what is in a name? *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:321.

Deterioration of disseminated cutaneous *Mycobacterium avium* complex infection with a leukaemoid reaction following institution of highly active antiretroviral therapy

EDITOR,—The impact of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) on the incidence of opportunistic infections (OI) in HIV infected patients has been well documented. HAART also frequently alters the clinical course of OI. Increasingly, immune reconstitution disease is recognised after starting HAART in patients with latent or established OI.^{1–3} Despite the marked reduction in incidence of disease due to *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) in the HIV infected population over the past 5 years, this OI is often implicated in immune reconstitution disease and may be difficult to treat.^{1–3} Focal mycobacterial lymphadenitis appears to be the commonest manifestation,^{1,3} but other organs may be involved.

A 40 year old white HIV positive man presented with *Staphylococcus aureus* tricuspid valve endocarditis: blood cultures also grew MAC. He had a history of cutaneous



Figure 1 (A) At initial presentation with MAC infection. Patient’s right shin and ankle showing painless dermal papules and nodules. A skin biopsy has been performed on the right shin. (B) Five days after re-presentation. Medial aspect of left ankle. There are two erythematous lesions, which were tender to touch. Both have a pustular centre.

Kaposi’s sarcoma and oesophageal candidiasis. After inpatient treatment of the endocarditis he defaulted from outpatient follow up. Five months later he re-presented with a 3 month history of fever, cough, malaise, and painless skin lesions on both arms and legs. Examination showed multiple dermal papules and nodules with necrosis and some scarring (fig 1A). The CD4 count was 10 cells \times 10⁶/l and the HIV viral load 202 300 copies/ml. Skin biopsy revealed multiple poorly formed granulomata; numerous acid fast bacilli (AFB) were seen and MAC was subsequently cultured from skin, sputum, urine, and blood. He was treated with rifabutin, clarithromycin, ethambutol, and isoniazid; treatment was reduced to clarithromycin and ethambutol alone, after 6 weeks when the mycobacterium was speciated. HAART,

consisting of stavudine, lamivudine, and efavirenz, was started 14 days after initiation of antimycobacterial therapy. The skin lesions resolved completely.

Seven weeks later he was readmitted with fever. Examination was unremarkable. Investigations showed total white count $18.2 \times 10^9/l$, with monocytes $15.2 \times 10^9/l$; CD4 count $70 \text{ cells} \times 10^9/l$, and HIV viral load 10 700 copies/ml. Five days after admission new painful skin lesions appeared on his arms and legs. These were tender, erythematous, and had a pustular centre (fig 1B). The monocyte count peaked at $43.2 \times 10^9/l$ on the sixth day. Aspiration of pus from a skin lesion revealed multiple AFB; MAC was subsequently cultured. Antimycobacterial therapy was intensified with addition of rifabutin, intravenous amikacin, and prednisolone (60 mg once daily reducing to zero over 14 days). The skin lesions resolved completely over 10 days as did the neutrophilia and monocytosis. Amikacin was stopped after 2 weeks. The patient remains well 8 months later.

The recurrence of disseminated MAC infection in our patient illustrates dramatically the impact of HAART on the clinical course of this disease. The highly inflammatory skin lesions that developed occurred at a higher CD4 count after HAART and differed significantly from the indolent lesions (more typical of cutaneous MAC infection in patients with advanced HIV disease) with which he originally presented. The appearances of these lesions together with the contemporaneous leukaemoid response suggest a different immunopathological process.^{4,5} This case illustrates the increasingly protean manifestations of immune reconstitution disease. Clinicians caring for patients with previously documented MAC should be aware of this phenomenon if HAART is commenced.

M BROWN
I G WILLIAMS
R F MILLER

Department of Sexually Transmitted Diseases,
Windeyer Institute of Medical Sciences, Royal Free and
University College Medical School,
London WC1E 6AU, UK

Correspondence to: Dr Miller
rmiller@gum.ucl.ac.uk

- 1 Race EM, Adelson-Mitty J, Kriegel GR, *et al.* Focal mycobacterial lymphadenopathy following initiation of protease-inhibitor therapy in patients with advanced HIV-1 disease. *Lancet* 1998;351:252-5.
- 2 Miller RF, Shaw PJ, Williams IG. Immune reconstitution CMV pneumonitis. *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:60 (letter).
- 3 Whitely W, Tariq A, Peters B, *et al.* Pyrexia of undetermined origin in the era of HAART. *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:484-8.
- 4 Cinti SK, Kaul Dr, Sax PE, *et al.* Recurrence of Mycobacterium avium infection in patients receiving highly active antiretroviral therapy and antimycobacterial agents. *Clin Infect Dis* 2000;30:511-4.
- 5 Havlir DV, Schrier RD, Torriani FJ, *et al.* Effect of potent antiretroviral therapy on immune responses to Mycobacterium avium in human immunodeficiency virus-infected subjects. *J Infect Dis* 2000;182:1658-63

Accepted for publication 29 January 2001

Detection or treatment: which outcome measure?

EDITOR,—The report by Rogstad *et al*¹ is a timely description of the problems associated with the management of patients diagnosed with genital chlamydial infection within and between established healthcare settings. The

inappropriate or inadequate treatment, low rates of partner notification, and lack of referral to genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic described were similar to the observations made in two recent studies. An investigation in Merseyside family planning clinics (FPC) showed that of 80 infected patients identified (n = 958) only 34% were treated within 1 month of diagnosis, 24% had no proof of treatment, and 13% never found out they were infected.² Similarly, a study of 112 women diagnosed with *Chlamydia trachomatis* attending FPCs showed that only 48% were known to have been treated 3 months after the test had been carried out.³ If diagnosis does not result in immediate treatment, patients can be lost to follow up. In turn, this can result in poor rates of partner notification, an increased likelihood of further transmission, a reduction in the impact of testing on disease incidence, and an increased risk of complications. In GUM clinics, diagnosis generally results in treatment and consequently surveillance data derived from this setting, the KC60 dataset, can be used as a measure of treatment success. In contrast, the above studies suggest that a proportion of diagnoses made in primary care may not be treated. This questions the validity of using diagnosed infection as an outcome measure for evaluating sexual health intervention in primary care. It also emphasises the significant role of clinical audit in the improvement of the quality of patient management.

Ultimately the effectiveness of intervention should be measured in terms of a reduced prevalence of pelvic inflammatory disease and associated sequelae.⁴ However, other more pragmatic outcome measures may need to be used. The UK NHS *C trachomatis* screening pilot is evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of opportunistic screening in primary and secondary healthcare settings in two health authorities.⁵ Three of the primary outcome measures that are being evaluated are the number of positive diagnoses, the proportion of the positive diagnoses treated, and the rate of patient or provider led partner notification. In the pilot, patient management has been improved by recalling positive patients to a centralised community office staffed by GUM health advisers. Preliminary data indicate that out of 900 positive patients identified through the Wirral arm of the pilot, treatment was not confirmed for 40 (4.4%) patients. Separate studies in Liverpool are also evaluating how patient management could be enhanced by GUM health advisers working in outreach sessions in a community FPC (AMCW) and a department of obstetrics and gynaecology (T Gleave, submitted to *British Journal of Family Planning*). Results from these studies will provide further evidence to guide the development of patient management and the outcome measures that could be used to assess future intervention strategies.

I SIMMS
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

H MALLINSON
Liverpool Public Health Laboratory

J HOPWOOD
NHS Chlamydia Screening Pilot

A M C WEBB
North Mersey Community NHS Trust

K FENTON
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre and
Department of STDs, Royal Free and University
College Medical School

J PIMENTA

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

Correspondence to: Mr Ian Simms, PHLS Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, 61 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5EQ, UK

- 1 Rogstad KE, Davies A, Murthy SK, *et al.* The management of Chlamydia trachomatis: combined community and hospital care. *Sex Transm Inf* 2000;76:493-4.
- 2 Harvey J, Webb A, Mallinson H. Chlamydia trachomatis screening in young people in Merseyside. *Br J Fam Plann* 2000;26:199-201.
- 3 Wilkinson C, Massil H, Evans J. An interface of chlamydia testing by community family planning clinics and referral to hospital genitourinary medicine clinics. *Br J Fam Plann* 2000;26:206-9.
- 4 Simms I, Hughes G, Catchpole M. Screening for Chlamydia trachomatis. *BMJ* 1998;317:680-1.
- 5 Pimenta J, Catchpole M, Gray M, *et al.* Screening for genital chlamydial infection. *BMJ* 2000;321:629-31.

Accepted for publication 2 February 2001

Obituaries

EDITOR,—The obituaries of three physicians, Ambrose King, Eric Dunlop, and David Oriol, appeared in quick succession in your columns.

By the time I started training in venereology, as it was then called (not a bad name incidentally because it means the science of the act of love which encompasses STIs, colposcopy, HIV disease, and sexual dysfunction) at the Whitechapel Clinic of the London Hospital in 1973 Ambrose King had already left. However, the clinic still sparkled (not physically you understand) from his inspirational radiance and he was spoken of in hushed, reverential tones.

Eric Dunlop was the senior physician at that time. To a very junior doctor he was literally an awe inspiring figure. By today's standards he did not educate or teach. Rather you were well aware that he had laid a "golden egg" and that there was a touch of colour and brilliance in his research work and lectures. I was taught basic day to day venereology by the senior charge nurses at that department. Eric Dunlop's meticulousness was legendary. We took nine specimens from each woman to screen for *Chlamydia trachomatis* (including three cervical curettings) and a cervical biopsy. The purpose built Dunlop-Jones male urethral curette was a most efficient method of obtaining chlamydial material, although its contemporaneous thalamic overstimulation did not endear it to the patients. This meticulousness transferred itself to one's own attitude to research, and many of us also aspired to achieve Eric Dunlop's larger than life persona and facility for developing newer ideas (never really worked for me!).

I later worked for David Oriol. He made advances by quietly yet relentlessly pushing away at the broad front of research and clinical medicine. He was attracted by many of the sensible, practical, therapeutic approaches of our American colleagues—for example, benzathine penicillin for syphilis, doxycycline for chlamydia, which were far from routinely practised in the United Kingdom at that time. David Oriol also insisted on each set of clinical notes being audited on a daily basis. This was in 1978, well before clinical audit became routine.

Both Eric Dunlop and David Oriol were wholly generous and encouraging to a young

physician whose clinical practice, research ideas, and papers didn't always make a lot of sense.

I grieve for their loss but I am grateful that I worked for these two great venereologists.

D GOLDMEIER
St Mary's Hospital, Jefferis Wing, Praed Street,
London W2 1NY, UK

Accepted for publication 2 February 2001

BOOK REVIEWS

The New Hite Report. Shere Hite. £12.99; Pp 667. London: Hamlyn, 2000. ISBN 0-600-60116-1.

This is a follow up on the author's 1976 *Report on Female Sexuality*. It confirms the findings of her earlier report on American women and includes a "postscript" which reports similar findings in UK, Australian, and New Zealand women. The emphasis is on orgasm frequency.

In the American part of the study three versions of a questionnaire (labelled I, II, and III) augment the earlier 1972-6 study (labelled IV). Altogether, the number of questionnaires distributed was 100 000 with 3019 returned. The number of questionnaires I, II, and III returned was 1844. Replies received from UK, Australian, and New Zealand women to questionnaire IV numbered 511. The author claims that, especially, questionnaires I, II, and III give a true representation of women of all ages and occupations. The figures are presented partly in the text and by detailed appendices. The text provides detailed individual quotes in abundance on all aspects of female sexuality and orgasm.

In brief, there is little new to report. Masturbation remains the surest source of orgasms both single and multiple. Orgasm "rarely" occurs during intercourse without additional stimulation. Most women were willing to accept sex with a man even if she didn't often have an orgasm with him. Lesbianism was a regular source of orgasm for a few women but many more would "like to try" such a relationship.

From the answers to questions and the personal views presented by women, it is clear that the majority support Hite's view that a "sexual revolution" is needed. They see the way forward as through greater openness. There is a need to destroy double standards—for example, the concept that sexy women, in contrast with sexy men, are not respectable. In addition, it is clear women would like it noted that they would appreciate the pattern and definition of sex to include greater diversity. Sexual intercourse on its own is not enough for many. Greater diversity is called for. In other words women's desires and needs, not least in achieving orgasm more regularly, need to be taken into account.

By way of summary, Hite calls for greater dissemination of data regarding the anatomical basis and the physiology of female orgasm with emphasis on the role of the clitoris. In her revolutionary terms she sees orgasm as a metaphor for women's power in society.

The findings confirm those of Freud, Kinsey *et al* as well as Masters and Johnson and make it clear that men not only need to take the clitoris seriously but to ensure that its function is more regularly fulfilled whatever the form of sexual congress.

R S MORTON

Management of Antimicrobials in Infectious Diseases: Impact of Antibiotic Resistance. Edited by Arch G Mainous III, Glair Pomeroy. Pp 350; \$99.50. New Jersey: Humana Press, 2000. ISBN 0-896-03821-1.

Over the years, many books on the use of antimicrobials in the treatment of infectious disease have been written. Although few of these books have a subtitle implying that resistance will be specifically dealt with (as with this book), most of them by necessity write about this topic. I approached this book with a degree of cynicism, expecting to find the same tales retold in the same formulaic way. The first part of the book was not what I expected and I was pleasantly surprised. The first seven chapters dealt with the science of resistance generally, and then with specific examples, in a way that was informative and relevant to many clinicians. These early chapters also information on epidemiology, public health measures, and vaccination that are relevant to managing the problems of resistant organisms. Although this is a multi-author book, there seemed to be more consistency in approach and writing in these early chapters than those found later. The latter part of the book was little more than the systems based summary of antimicrobial use found in so many books.

As is to be expected with a book written by American authors, there are differences in practice from that in the United Kingdom: recommendations for treatment of community acquired pneumonia differ from those of the British Thoracic Society; recommendations for the treatment of infective endocarditis differ from those of the BSAC Working Party. Although generic drugs, some of these are different (although comparable) from those we would use in the United Kingdom. The authors frequently recommend the use of trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole; because of the risk of sulphonamide toxicity, the CSM only recommends the use of this combination for specific indications in the United Kingdom. In the chapter on meningitis the authors do not recommend the immediate use of penicillin upon clinical suspicion (UK guidance). The controversy of use of antibiotics in the treatment of infective diarrhoea is not discussed. Most importantly, the adverse effects of using antibiotics in shigellosis in children and EHEC infection are not mentioned.

The chapters on the treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV are short for a specialist reader, and there really should have been a separate chapter on hepatitis. I doubt there is much in this book that the established GUM clinician or scientist will find helpful. The trainee GUM physician may be confused or misled.

M J GILL

Division of Infection and Immunity, Medical School,
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston,
Birmingham B15 2TT, UK

NOTICES

International Herpes Alliance and International Herpes Management Forum

The International Herpes Alliance has introduced a website (www.herpesalliance.org) from which can be downloaded patient information leaflets. Its sister organisation the International Herpes Management Forum (website: www.IHMF.org) has launched new guidelines on the management of herpesvirus infections in pregnancy at the 9th International Congress on Infectious Disease (ICID) in Buenos Aires.

Pan-American Health Organization, regional office of the World Health Organization

A catalogue of publications is available online (www.paho.org). The monthly journal of PAHO, the Pan American Journal of Public Health, is also available (subscriptions: pubsvic@tsp.sheridan.com).

MSSVD Course in STIs and HIV, Spring 2001, to be held at the Institute for Materials, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, UK

This modular course runs twice a year and is aimed predominantly at SpRs, NCCGs, and practitioners from overseas. It leads to the diploma in genitourinary medicine of the Society of Apothecaries but participants can complete the course without taking the examination. The course aims to provide participants with an overview of current practice in GUM, sexual health, STIs, and HIV infection and related areas, focusing particularly on practice in the UK, but within the context of the worldwide epidemic of STIs.

Module 2, 30 April-1 May 1, Viral infections other than HIV; Module 3, 2-4 May, HIV infection. Further details: Sue Bird, MSSVD Course Secretariat, PO Box 77, East Horsley, Surrey KT24 5YP, UK

6th European Conference on Experimental AIDS Research (ECEAR 2001), 23-26 June 2001, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, UK

Further details: ECEAR 2001 Conference Secretary, Division of Retrovirology, NIBSC, Blanche Lane, South Mimms, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 3QG, UK.

International Congress of Sexually Transmitted Infections, 24-27 June 2001, Berlin, Germany

Further details: Congress Partner GmbH, Krausenstrasse 63, D-10117, Berlin, Germany (tel: +49-30-204 500 41; fax: +49-30-204 500 42; email: berlin@cpb.de).

1st Asia Pacific Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care

The 1st Asia Pacific Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care will be held from 19-21 September 2001 in Sydney, Australia. Presented by the BMJ Publishing Group (London, UK) and Institute for Healthcare Improvement (Boston, USA), with the support of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (Australia), Safety and

Quality Council (Australia), NSW Health (Australia) and Ministry of Health (New Zealand). Further details: quality@bma.org.uk; fax +44 (0) 7383 6869.

41st St Andrew's Day Festival Symposium on Therapeutics

The 41st St Andrew's Day Festival Symposium on Therapeutics will be held on 6–7 December 2001 at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Further details: Ms Eileen Strawn, Symposium Co-ordinator (tel: 0131 225 7324; fax: 0131 220 4393; email: e.strawn@rcpe.ac.uk; website: www.rcpe.ac.uk).

10th International Congress on Behçet's Disease will be held in Berlin 27–29 June 2002

Further details: Professor Ch Zouboulis (email: zoubbere@zedat.fu-berlin.de).

5th World Congress of Perinatal Medicine, 23–27 September 2001, Palau de Congressos de Barcelona - Avda Maria Cristina s/n, Barcelona, Spain

Further details: Dr Francesc Figueras, Congress Promotion Secretary (fax: +34.93.451.74 38; www.perinatology2001.com).

Second International Conference on Sexual Health, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 23–28 February 2002. Calls for abstracts deadline 1 September 2001

Further details: European Secretariat, Dr Richard Burack (tel: +44 (0) 20 8599 8029; email: siamcare@aol.com).

20th World Congress of Dermatology, Paris, 1–5 July 2002

Further details: P Fournier, Colloquium, 12 rue de la Croix St Faubin, 75011 Paris, France (rel: +33 1 44 64 15 15; fax: +33 1 44 64 15 16; email: p.fournier@colloquium.fr; website: www.derm-wcd-2002.com).

Direct Access to Medline

Medline

Link to Medline from the homepage and get straight into the National Library of Medicine's premier bibliographic database. Medline allows you to search across 9 million records of bibliographic citations and author abstracts from approximately 3,900 current biomedical journals.

www.sextransinf.com