As the festive season approaches, we hope you will enjoy this month’s ‘double bill’—a regular journal issue accompanied by a Supplement for the World Health Organization, exploring the international challenges of antimicrobial resistance in gonorrhoea. The advent of the penicillin age at the end of World War II transformed the treatment of gonorrhoea, including disseminated infection of which the resurgence is the subject of an epidemiological report this month. Neisseria gonorrhoeae showed its potential for developing resistance to our new magic bullet early on, has kept pace with novel antimicrobials, and now seriously threatens to become untreatable. The gonococcus is at the cutting edge of bacterial evolution and untreatable. The gonococcus is at the cutting edge of bacterial evolution and untreatable. The gonococcus is at the cutting edge of bacterial evolution and untreatable.

MSM (men who have sex with men) form a major theme this month, with behavioural research from across the globe exploring various aspects of risk. These bear witness to varying pragmatic needs. Vu and colleagues describe low levels of HIV testing, high levels of unprotected anal intercourse (UAI) and substantial bridging to the heterosexual population among MSM living in three major Nigerian cities. Prestage and colleagues explore the implications of age difference among Australian MSM, pointing out that although age differences do not seem to affect overall risk, younger men are more likely to take the receptive position in age discrepant partnerships. In a study from Malaysia Lim et al report high levels of risk behaviour, along with low HIV prevalence and low levels of HIV testing. The targeting of interventions to men at highest behavioural risk is important, and this appears to have happened with hepatitis B vaccination in the Netherlands. Xiridou et al present a modelling study which suggests that the observed reduction in hepatitis B can only be explained if higher risk MSM were more likely to receive vaccination. The implications for countries without infant vaccination are explored.

We are always looking for new topics for educational articles, and hope that you will be interested to read ‘Holding up the Mirror’. This is a guide to peer review of services, based on a case study of the peer review processes undertaken in the South West of England. It is likely to be particularly relevant in addressing the risks of service fragmentation which are emerging through as a result of recent changes in commissioning.

A study of adverse obstetric outcomes in relation to STI interestingly reports that the risks were similar for STIs during pregnancy as before pregnancy, suggesting that there may be complex potential for confounding. Other studies explore the effectiveness of couples interventions for HIV prevention, the most effective options for pre-exposure prophylaxis in sub-Saharan Africa, and the changing patterns of female sex work and STI in Bangalore.

We hope you will find this issue interesting—please tell us what you think on Twitter, through the website or even by writing us a letter.

Competing interests None.

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