



# Hygieia

## HIV, THE UK, AND WEST AFRICA

The number of people infected with HIV in West Africa and diagnosed in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland has increased in recent years, and evidence exists of heterosexual transmission within the UK from people infected in West Africa. From 1985 to 2003, 1324 people were diagnosed or reported with HIV had probably been infected in West Africa. Most (917) were HIV-1 infected, and the proportion of HIV-1 and HIV-2 infections varied by country of infection. A further 130 people were infected by heterosexual intercourse within the UK by a partner probably infected in West Africa. (*Sex Transm Infect* 2005;**81**:338–41)

## BRONCHIECTASIS TOO HIGH DOWN UNDER

The incidence of bronchiectasis is high in New Zealand children, and varies substantially between ethnicities. For two years, researchers surveyed all New Zealand paediatricians monthly for new cases of bronchiectasis, and confirmed cases were issued a postal questionnaire one year later. An overall incidence of 3.7 per 100 000 under 15 year old children per year was estimated, of which children of Pacific ethnicity had an incidence of 17.8 compared with 4.8 Maori, 1.5 European, and 2.4 other per 100 000 per year. Further studies are necessary to establish why New Zealand has such high incidence of bronchiectasis compared with other developed countries. (*Arch Dis Child* 2005;**90**:737–40)

## GOOD NEWS FROM INDIA

Blindness control efforts seem to have had a tangible effect in India, as recent data suggest a recession in blindness prevalence in the country. Numerous initiatives have been launched in India in an attempt to control blindness, including the first ever 100% publicly funded programme and a World Bank supported cataract specific project. Following recent collection of data, researchers compared them with

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previous studies and found that, although many factors remained constant, a reduction in overall blindness prevalence in people aged 50 and over was observed. The authors state that there is now hope that further progress has been made, but that to do so strong political will is essential. (*Br J Ophthalmol* 2005;**89**:257–60)

## CHILDHOOD OBESITY OUTCOMES

Persistent obesity—that which carries through from childhood to adulthood—is associated with poorer employment and relationship outcomes in women. Researchers analysed data on over 8000 adults who had body mass index calculated at 10 and 30 years of age, and found that persistent obesity was not associated with any adverse adult outcomes in men. Obesity restricted to childhood also had little impact on adult outcomes, and the authors suggest that efforts aimed at reducing the burden of obesity on adult life should focus on the prevention of obesity continuing from childhood to adulthood. (*BMJ* 2005;**330**:1354–7)

## HERPES IN THE UK

Epidemiological trends in genital herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) and type 2 (HSV-2) seem to vary between ethnic groups in the United Kingdom. Almost 200 consecutive genitourinary medicine clinic attendees who presented with symptoms suggestive of genital herpes were tested for presence of the infection, and the results showed that HSV-2 was associated with black Caribbean and black African ethnicity, while HSV-1 was associated with white ethnicity. Independent predictors of a positive result included heterosexual group, presenting within five days of symptom onset, and visible genital ulceration. (*Sex Transm Infect* 2005;**81**:306–8)

## HIV BRIDGES IN SENEGAL

Men who visit brothels in Senegal have significant potential for spreading HIV beyond initial high risk behaviour groups. A sexual behaviour HIV prevalence survey was carried out among clients of prostitutes working in brothels in Dakar: all men leaving prostitutes' rooms were asked to answer the questions and to donate saliva for HIV testing. Findings suggest

that a significant proportion of clients represent a potential bridge for HIV transmission between prostitutes and partners from the general population, and the authors suggest that efforts should be made to educate specific groups at higher risk for HIV infection, particularly young men from the working class neighbourhoods of Dakar. (*Sex Transm Infect* 2005;**81**:342–4)

## HIV EPIDEMIOLOGY IN GAY MINORITY MEN

Homosexual black and ethnic minority men (BME) account for just over 1 in 10 new HIV diagnoses in homosexual men in England and Wales. Researchers reviewed data from two national HIV/AIDS surveillance systems from 1997 to 2002 and found that, during that time, 1040 homosexual BME were newly diagnosed with HIV; 27% were black Caribbean, 12% black African, 10% black other, 8% south Asian, and 44% other/mixed. More than half of those infected probably acquired their infection in the United Kingdom, and undiagnosed HIV prevalence in Caribbean born homosexual men was high. The authors state that “these data confirm the need to remain alert to the sexual health needs and evolving epidemiology of HIV among homosexual BME in England and Wales”. (*Sex Transm Infect* 2005;**81**:345–50)

## INTERNATIONAL INJURY IN ADOLESCENTS

Socioeconomic status and social risk taking are highly associated with injuries to adolescents. After analysis of data from cross sectional surveys from national samples of students in 35 countries, researchers found that high material wealth was positively and consistently associated with medically treated and sports related injuries, while poverty was associated with fighting injuries. Social risk taking was positively associated with medically treated, street, and fighting injuries, but not school and sports injuries. The authors note that the high prevalence of adolescent injury—ranging from 33% to 64% in boys and 23% to 51% in girls—confirms its importance as a health problem, and suggest that prevention initiatives should focus on the aetiologies of specific injury types. (*Injury Prevention* 2005;**11**:213–18)