

Editorial

As we start a new year, the 4th issue of SLJID continues to raise the challenges which face clinical practice in situations with resource limitations. Health care associated infections are of worldwide concern as they increase morbidity and mortality and have economic and social implications for the health care providers as well as patients. This issue of the journal highlights some of the issues relating to transmission of pathogens in a health care setting.

The control of MRSA transmission continues to be a challenge even in a reasonably well resourced centre. The high risk of transmission is demonstrated in the setting of an orthopaedic ward with high patient throughput associated with limited space and facilities for effective infection control measures. Improvements in hand hygiene is one practical way in which such transmission may be reduced or even controlled. The study on hand hygiene practice of medical and nursing students highlights the need for early and adequate training and the requirement to provide facilities for hand hygiene in all clinical settings. The case series on parainfluenzae B virus infection demonstrates the effectiveness of such measures in limiting a potentially serious outbreak in a general medical ward.

In the context of increased antimicrobial resistance, the exploration of plants used in traditional medicine is to be encouraged. Many groups outside and within Sri Lanka are working in this area and the Journal welcomes its first paper in this field of study. We look forward to more interactions between the traditional and allopathic systems of medicine and breakthroughs which would be of benefit to patients under our care.

As pointed out by Prof Inglis in our invited article, the microbiologist's role in severe sepsis, though an essential component, is limited. However, accurate aetiological diagnosis of infective disease continues to be a necessity for optimal management of patients – as shown by the paper on trichomoniasis as well as the 2 case reports of musculoskeletal infections caused by unexpected bacterial pathogens. Continuing improvement in the laboratory services is an essential need, the resources for which have to be sought in competition with many other needs in the health care system. Microbiologists supported by clinical colleagues have to work with health administrators to develop and maintain a service that would adequately serve both clinical and public health needs of this country. Studies of cost benefit analysis of such a service would be greatly welcomed by the Journal.

We hope that you will continue to find the contents of this issue useful and thought provoking. Please let us have your feedback and as well as contributions for publication in forthcoming issues. Please visit the journal's submission and peer review website at <http://www.sljol.info/>

Vasanthi Thevanesam

Editor – Sri Lankan Journal of Infectious Diseases