

## **Editorial**

The world of microbiology is fast expanding. Diagnostic microbiology is moving beyond microscopy and culture to improvements in speed of detection as well as identification of unculturable microbes. However, in many parts of the world, the gap between knowledge and the practical application of existing knowledge remains and may even be widening. There are many reasons for such gaps, including lack of the required financial as well as personnel inputs, a low level of education of the general population and ongoing disturbances, ranging from natural disasters to civil war.

Papers in this issue of the Journal highlights gaps which exist, even with well organized health systems, both curative and preventive.

Hepatitis B virus is very well known and both diagnostic capacity as well as preventive strategies for Hepatitis B infection in the population has been established for at least 4 decades. It is disturbing therefore to discover that transmission of Hepatitis B still occurs in a community as described by Biswall et al who attribute such transmission to poor practice by local health workers. Muthugala and Galagoda uncover the risks of transmission in families of Hepatitis B surface antigen positive persons, most of who were discovered by routine screening. The efforts needed to reduce the risk of such transmission are discussed by both groups and need to be taken seriously by healthcare workers as well as decision makers.

Food and water borne diseases continue to occur in all parts of the globe, despite heroic measures to reduce their occurrence as well their impact. Contamination of water sources which has either not been built to the required specifications or which have not been maintained is not surprising. Studies such as the one published in this issue bring the dangers of such contamination to the foreground and hopefully will contribute towards providing safe water, not only to the area of the study but more generally to the larger community.

We hope that you will continue to find the contents of this issue useful and thought provoking. Do let us have your feedback as well as contributions for publication in forthcoming issues. Please visit the journal's submission and peer review website at <http://www.sljol.info/>. We would also invite you to register as a Reviewer, as the availability of a wide pool of subject specialists for this purpose would assist us in our task of continuously improving the quality of the Journal.

Vasanthi Thevanesam

*Editor – Sri Lankan Journal of Infectious Diseases*