

Editorial

Welcome to *Sexual Health*

I am delighted to welcome you to the first issue of *Sexual Health*. We are launching this new journal at a time when the devastation of HIV/AIDS continues to spread relentlessly and Asia is becoming the new epicentre of infection. Sexually transmitted infections are rising in most countries and the levels of induced abortion are unacceptably high. Sexual dysfunction is also extraordinarily common. Sexual health professionals who work with these issues will now have a journal that deals with all these areas of sexual health and one with a particular focus on the Asian Pacific Region. The challenges for HIV/AIDS are enormous. Over forty million people infected worldwide with 4 million of those in India, second only to Southern Africa. Worldwide the World Health Organization's aim is to provide HIV/AIDS treatment to three million people by the end of 2005. Of these 600 000 are in India.

Sexually transmitted infections are rising and play a central role in HIV transmission. Addressing these issues is not just about control of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, but often involves deeper issues relevant to sexual health such as women's right to *safe sexuality* and to *autonomy in all decisions*. *Sexual Health's* broad scope will allow it to address a wider range of issues relevant to HIV control than other journals with a narrower focus.

Sexual health also includes reproductive health, teenage pregnancy and sexual dysfunction. Teenage pregnancy, for example, has enormous consequences for the mother, the child and the community.¹ Sexual dysfunction is very common with recent community based surveys revealing that a significant proportion of men and women experience significant difficulties with their sexual function.² Less well documented factors such as discrimination within communities can also adversely effect the sexual health of communities.

Our objective is to provide a journal that is directed towards those working in sexual health, as clinicians, public health practitioners or as researchers in behavioural, clinical, laboratory, public health or social sciences. Ensuring that we

cover all these areas will provide readers with a single journal that covers all areas relevant to their practice.

I am delighted to welcome the other editors of this journal. We have distinguished colleagues from China, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Thailand, the east coast of the United States and Australia as our editors. They cover a broad area of sexual health including clinical, laboratory, behavioural, public health and social sciences. The Editorial Board has a broader representation throughout Asia including Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan and New Zealand.

Sexual Health is the official journal of the Australasian College of Sexual Health Physicians and we anticipate that it will soon become the official journal of several other equally distinguished bodies.

In this first issue we have a variety of papers covering clinical, public health, social and laboratory aspects of sexual health. These include: a detailed description of the spread of HIV in the world's most populous country — China, obstacles to HIV testing in Africa, a comprehensive description of HIV subtypes in Asia, optimal self administered sampling methods for detecting sexually transmitted infections, sexual dysfunction, genital injuries following assault, the role of macrophages in HIV progression and studies optimising screening for sexually transmitted infections.

We encourage you to submit your work to our new journal if you feel it would be of value to our audience and encourage you to subscribe.

1 Teenage Pregnancy. London: Social Exclusion Unit; 1999 Jun.

2 Richters J, Grulich AE, Smith AMA, Rissel CE. Sexual difficulties in a representative sample of adults. *Aust N Z J Public Health* 2003; 27(2): 164–70.

Christopher Fairley
Editor