Respiratory diseases have been reported to cause immense health burdens worldwide; each year about 4 million people die prematurely from chronic respiratory diseases. In recent decades, modern medicine has advanced the length and quality of life in most countries. At the same time, increasing health costs have threatened many nations financial health and the effort needed to care for the ill and dying affects national productivity. Poor health along with lack of education and lack of an enabling political structure are the major impediments to a country’s development.

In the past, focus has been on communicable diseases with a thrust on tuberculosis. However, there has been an increasing awareness on the importance of the non-communicable diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and lung cancer. The incidence of lung cancer has been on the increase and the aetiology may differ between the developing and the more developed countries. However, the role of occupational lung diseases cannot be overemphasised. The increasing use of biomass fuel and smoking also has a tremendous role to play.

To this effect, The Forum of International Societies (FIRS) have keyed into the efforts by United Nations to tackle these problems (see Report on page 4). The greatest burden to this society has been the ‘big five’ respiratory conditions. The first step for respiratory health is to prevent illness before it occurs.

The FIRS vision of controlling and eliminating respiratory diseases requires the use of current effective tools, coupled with investment in respiratory research to help control these diseases by providing better and more effective treatment methods.

In addition to public health measures, developing healthcare capacity requires the education of clinicians and researchers. The recruitment and input of a wider spectrum of medical personnel from the African sub-region would help to give the document a more balanced outlook.

While the FIRS roadmap has some merits, it has to take a more comprehensive look into the challenges of these respiratory diseases and proffer pragmatic solutions.

Prof Gregory Erhabor, Co-Editor, AJRM

Contents

2 News/Notes

4 Report
Respiratory diseases in the world. Realities of today – opportunities for tomorrow
The Forum of International Respiratory Societies

14 Review Article
Advances in the treatment of severe asthma
F Gandia and S Rouatbi

18 Review Article
Asthma control in cities of developing countries – results of a five-city survey
G A Nadeau, I Samji, R D Walters, S F R Godsin, J Lucas, and M Moodley

24 Original Article
The Asthma Control Test and its relationship with lung function parameters
J Jumbo, B O Adeniyi, P O Ikuabe, and G E Erhabor

28 Original Article
Knowledge, awareness, and practice of the use of peak flow meters by physicians in the management of asthma in children
A A Raheem, R O Soremekun, and O F Adeniyi

33 Case Report
Foreign body aspiration and tuberculosis: possible misdiagnosis
R C Ideh, U Egere, D B Garba, and T Corrah

Co-Editors
Dr Evans Amukoye,
KEMRI, Centre for Respiratory Disease Research, Nairobi
Email: amukoye@gmail.com

and

Prof. Gregory Erhabor,
Consultant Chest Physician, OAU Teaching Hospital, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Email: gegerhabor7@yahoo.com

Consulting Editor
Prof Stephen Gordon
Head, Department of Clinical Sciences
Professor of Respiratory Medicine,
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK
Email: sbgordon@liverpool.ac.uk

Editorial Board
Tuberculosis
Dr Jeremiah Chakaya, Kenya
Prof Keertan Dedha, South Africa

Chronic and occupational lung disease
Prof Ben Nemery, Belgium

Pneumonia
Prof Stephen Gordon, UK

Paediatrics
Prof Refiloe Masekela, South Africa
Prof Lisa Obimbo, Kenya
Dr Regina Oladokun, Nigeria

Asthma
Prof Elvis Irusen
Dr Joe Aluoch, Kenya

Managing Editor
Penny Lang
Email: penny@fsg.co.uk

Publisher
Bryan Pearson

ISSN 1747–5597 (print)
ISSN 2053-2512 (online)

All contents are © 2014
FSG Communications Ltd

Correspondence to:
African Journal of Respiratory Medicine
FSG Communications Ltd, Vine House Fair Green,
Reach, Cambridge CB25 0JD, UK.
www.fsg.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1638 743633
Fax: +44 (0)1638 743998
E-mail: editor@fsg.co.uk

The Pan African Thoracic Society exists to promote respiratory health in Africa. It is supported by the Nuffield Foundation (UK) and the American Thoracic Society.
www.africanthoracic.org