

Foreword



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Amesika Nyaku, MD MS is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and a physician-scientist. She provides clinical care for people living with HIV or other infectious diseases and substance use disorders. Her research interests lie at the intersection of HIV and substance use disorders. She focuses on 1) evaluating long-acting therapeutics for HIV and opioid use disorder, 2) the implementation of integrated care models for HIV and substance use disorders to improve health outcomes, and 3) increasing the inclusion and participation of racial/ethnic minorities in clinical trials research. She is also co-director of the Northern New Jersey Medication-Assisted Treatment Center of Excellence that is tasked with assisting the state in expanding access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder through education, novel service delivery and community collaboration.

Welcome to the first issue of *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases*, which aims to publish topical interviews, reviews, editorials, case studies and original research in the field of infectious diseases. The development of antibiotics and vaccines remain among the greatest accomplishments in medical science, and yet infectious diseases are the single major causes of childhood mortality until age of 14 worldwide. We hope that our content will be of interest to infectious disease specialists, virologists, immunologists, epidemiologists and other healthcare professionals with an interest in infectious diseases.

Our expert interviews aim to provide a snapshot of hot topics in medicine. In the first, Jack Sobel discusses the clinical development of oteseconazole, a new medication that offers women an effective and safe treatment option for recurrent vulvovaginal candidiasis.

Next, we focus on the ever-present subject of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Alice Grima describes her study investigating whether prior vaccination reduces the risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 as new variants of SARS-CoV-2 emerge. Although vaccination has been a huge success, vaccines may not elicit the same immune response, and thus not deliver the same level of protection in those who are severely immunocompromised. Hugh Montgomery provides an overview of the new monoclonal antibody combination therapy of tixagevimab and cilgavimab, and reviews clinical evidence in support of its use. It is increasingly recognized that many people suffer from debilitating symptoms for months after SARS-CoV-2 infection, termed 'long COVID'. While most research has focussed on adults, Katelyn Krivchenia considers the incidence, risk factors and severity of long COVID in children. Identifying drugs that control the progression of SARS-CoV-2 and its symptoms has been an urgent research priority during the pandemic. Andrew Ustianowski discusses the RECOVERY Trial (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT04381936) data on baricitinib and its findings.

Our final interviews address the issue of HIV infection. Antiretroviral drugs have vastly improved outcomes and survival for those living with HIV, however, continued innovation in therapies that reduce side effects and increase flexibility of dosing are still of great importance to the field. Josep Mallolas describes a clinical study evaluating the real-world efficacy and safety of the single tablet regimen of bicitgravir/emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide. In addition, Celia Jonsson-Oldenbüttel discusses the advantages of cabotegravir/rilpivirine, a long-acting treatment regimen comprising intramuscular injections of cabotegravir and rilpivirine, and considers the challenges of its implementation.

We continue with the subject of HIV for the first of our review articles. Gill and Bekker discuss the licencing of the dapivirine vaginal ring, a safe and effective means of reducing HIV infection in women living in South Africa. Eric Egelund discusses the advantages of long-acting injectable methods of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV.

Finally, we return to the subject of vulvovaginal candidiasis. Mahmoud Ghannoun reviews the current treatment options, the recently approved antifungals ibrexafungerp and oteseconazole, and considers potential future therapeutic directions.

We conclude with two case studies, which give insights into unusual manifestations of common diseases. Rieke et al. describe a case of SARS-CoV-2 reinfection after 12 months in a patient with X-linked agammaglobulinaemia. In addition, Venkatraman Rajkumar discusses a rare manifestation of extrapulmonary tuberculosis in an immunocompetent adult.

The editors of *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases* would like to thank all authors who contributed towards this edition. We would also like to thank our editorial board for their support and guidance. Thanks also go to all organizations and media partners for their on-going support. We hope that you will find plenty of interest among these articles. □