

Editorial

Dissemination reports are concise informative reports of health-related research supported by the Health and Medical Research Fund administered by the Food and Health Bureau. In this edition, we present 11 dissemination reports of projects related to traditional Chinese medicine, respiratory infection, and infectious diseases. In particular, three projects are highlighted due to their potentially significant findings, impact on healthcare delivery and practice, and/or contribution to health policy formulation in Hong Kong.

Accumulating evidence suggests electroacupuncture may have an analgesic effect in specific clinical settings. Teoh et al¹ conducted a double-blind randomised controlled study in 128 consecutive patients undergoing diagnostic endoscopic ultrasonography (EUS) for the first time to investigate the efficacy of electroacupuncture in reducing endoscopy-related pain and discomfort and the consumption of sedatives and analgesics during EUS. The primary outcome was the dosage of patient-controlled analgesia consumed. The secondary outcomes included pain, patient satisfaction, endoscopist satisfaction, patient willingness to repeat the procedure, total procedure time, episodes of hypotension (defined as systolic blood pressure of <90 mmHg), and desaturation (defined as SaO₂ of <90%). The results showed that electroacupuncture reduced sedative and analgesic demands with low risk of adverse events and improved patient experience during EUS. Electroacupuncture could reduce the use of propofol and the need of the presence of an anaesthesiologist during endoscopic ultrasonography. It could avoid the potential adverse effects related to propofol usage and improve the safety of sedation and analgesia. The recovery time from anaesthesia could be significantly reduced.

In 2012, a novel human coronavirus (CoV) in the Middle East region was found to be associated with severe respiratory illness with high mortality rate. This novel lineage C betaCoV was named Middle East respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus (MERS-CoV). Lau et al² conducted extensive surveillance of betaCoVs in bats of different species to better understand the origin of

the ancestor of MERS-CoV. The project team found betaCoVs in 267 of 9866 bats sampled and noted that at least five different betaCoV species were circulating in specific bat species. This indicates that bats are a very important reservoir for betaCoVs. The results are important for future research on the emergence of CoVs in humans and provide clues on the animal origins and evolutionary pathways of MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are preventable through early identification and effective intervention. Population-based prevalence data can be used to understand the disease burden and distribution as well as effective prevention and control measures. To provide guidance information for future STI control and prevention, Wong et al³ conducted a territory-wide STI and sexual health survey to determine the prevalence and associated individual and contextual risk factors of genital chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis in a representative sample of nearly 900 adults aged 18 to 49 years in Hong Kong. They found that the prevalence of composite STIs was 1.9%, with 1.2% among men and 2.5% among women, and similarly for chlamydia at 1.4% overall, with 1.2% for men and 1.7% for women. However, the prevalence of chlamydial infection was 5.8% in young sexually active women, 4.8% in sexually active men, and 4.1% in sexually active women aged 40 to 49 years. Younger age, living alone, and males (or females with male partners) travelling outside Hong Kong in the past 12 months were identified as independent risk factors for both composite STIs and chlamydia. The authors suggest that mandatory surveillance and reporting of STIs and large population-based screening of chlamydia should be considered.

We hope you will enjoy this selection of research dissemination reports. Electronic copies of these dissemination reports and the corresponding full reports can be downloaded individually from the Research Fund Secretariat website (<https://rfs2.fhb.gov.hk/>). Researchers interested in the funds administered by the Food and Health Bureau also may visit the website for detailed information about application procedures.

Supplement co-editors



Dr Richard A Collins
Chief Scientific Reviewer
(Research Office)
Food and Health Bureau



Dr Martin Chan Chi-wai
Senior Scientific Reviewer
(Research Office)
Food and Health Bureau

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