

We are delighted to bring you another series of dissemination reports of research projects supported by the *Health Services Research Fund (HSRF)\** and the *Health Care and Promotion Fund (HCPF)*. This edition features projects related to ageing, cancer, child and adolescent health, and respiratory diseases. Several projects are highlighted due to their significant findings, impact on health care delivery and practice, and/or contribution to health policy formulation in Hong Kong.

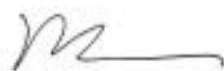
A diagnosis of breast cancer can often leave women overwhelmed, which may affect their ability to participate effectively in treatment decision-making. In a series of reports, Fielding and Lam<sup>1-3</sup> outline strategies that allow surgeons to emphasise the treatment options available and the recommended choice based on the particular circumstances of the case. By providing sufficient information and listening to their patients' concerns, surgeons may involve their patients in the decision-making process more effectively. Collectively, these studies have had an impact on health outcomes by reducing the number of harmful incidents, that is, post-surgical depression, in women receiving breast surgery for cancer.

Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (AIS) is a serious deformity of the spine. Information on the role of bone mineral density (BMD) on the progression of AIS is lacking. Cheng et al<sup>4</sup> wished to understand the relationship between calcium intake and weight-bearing physical activity on BMD in adolescent girls with AIS. At the age of 14 years, there was a significant correlation between calcium intake and weight-bearing physical activity with BMD in girls with AIS. Insufficient weight-bearing exercise appeared to be a risk factor for AIS in this population. The study also found that girls with AIS also had a low dietary intake of calcium. Increased exercise may help in limiting the effects of AIS. However, because of their physical appearance, girls with AIS may be less willing to take part in exercise regimens. Physicians may consider monitoring BMD in their young AIS patients in addition to offering advice on the benefits of weight-bearing physical activity and maintenance of a high-calcium diet.

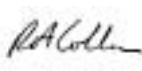
Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) predisposes sufferers to an increased risk of a variety of conditions including hypertension and stroke. Nasal continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is a safe and effective treatment for severe OSA but the optimal treatment for mild OSA is less clear. Ip et al<sup>5</sup> validated a health-related quality of life (HRQOL) instrument for use as an outcome measure in sleep apnoea in Chinese people and evaluated the effectiveness of different available treatments (lifestyle modification alone versus the addition of CPAP or oral appliances [OA]) in patients with mild or moderate sleep apnoea. They found that CPAP plus weight control was better than OA plus weight control for improving sleep parameters and daytime sleepiness, but was similar to OA in improvement of HRQOL. Despite these clear improvements, other factors such as convenience and cost may play a role in determining which interventions patients actually adopt.

We hope you find this selection of dissemination reports informative and enjoyable to read. These dissemination reports and the projects' full reports may be downloaded individually from the Research Fund Secretariat website (<http://www.hwfb.gov.hk/grants>), where more information about the funds, including application procedures, can also be found.

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### References

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\* The HSRF was succeeded by the *Health and Health Services Research Fund (HHSRF)* in 2002.