Dissemination reports are concise informative reports of health-related research supported by funds administered by the Food and Health Bureau, namely the *Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases* (RFCID), the *Health and Health Services Research Fund* (HHSRF), and the *Health Services Research Fund* (HSRF). This issue contains 10 dissemination reports of funded projects related to health care delivery, health services research, respiratory infectious diseases, and viral hepatitis. In particular, three projects are highlighted due to their potentially significant findings, impact on health care delivery and practice, and/or contribution to health policy formulation in Hong Kong.

Currently, over one-third of the world's population is affected by hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) infection. In Hong Kong the prevalence of hepatitis B seropositivity in the adults is between 4 and 10%. A significant proportion of these individuals go on to develop chronic hepatitis, but it is unclear which subgroups are at risk and will develop its related complications. Huang et al[1] conducted a thorough literature review to determine whether specific HBV or HCV genotypes influenced progression to hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). The data indicated that HBV genotypes A and C conferred increased risk for development of HCC, whereas HBV genotypes B and D were associated with a slightly reduced risk. Similarly, HCV genotype 1b was associated with a significantly increased risk of developing HCC. Knowing which genotype predisposes patients to hepatic carcinogenesis can help to better target populations for monitoring and/or early intervention, potentially improving early diagnosis and prolong life.

Emerging infectious diseases have posed a significant threat to human health. During late 2002 and early 2003, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) first occurred in Guangdong province, China, and subsequently spread to many other countries. The potential for further outbreaks was curtailed by closure and depopulation of wild animal markets in early 2004. A novel coronavirus, SARS-coronavirus (SARS-CoV) was identified as the aetiological agent responsible for the initial outbreak. Chen et al[2] conducted an analysis of samples collected during the 2003 SARS outbreak supplemented with systematic virological surveillances of coronavirus in bats and other wild animals between 2004 and 2007, with a view to identifying the natural reservoir of SARS-CoV. After exhaustive studies they identified bats as the natural reservoir for coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV, that affect humans and animals. However, the immediate precursor of SARS-CoV remains unknown. The authors call for continued surveillance and note the potential risk posed by live animal markets in the dissemination of disease.

Evaluation of health-related quality of life (QoL) in young children (aged <5 years) with cancer mainly relies on proxy assessments performed by nurses or parents, both of which are subject to bias. Most children over 3 years old have the capacity to respond in meaningful and reliable ways, provided that they are assessed in an age-appropriate manner. This would enable direct QoL assessment. Fielding et al[3] set out to develop an age-appropriate direct assessment of QoL in 3 to 5 years old children with cancer, and to validate its use in 5 to 8 years old cancer children of southern Chinese cultural background. They found that the direct measurement of QoL in young children aged 30 to 72 months was feasible and valid, which may enhance cancer care in this vulnerable population.

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

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