

# Editorial

Dissemination reports are concise informative reports of health-related research supported by funds administered by the Food and Health Bureau, for example, the *Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases* (which was consolidated into the *Health and Medical Research Fund* in December 2011). In this edition, 13 dissemination reports of projects related to respiratory infectious diseases, fungal disease, and other viral diseases are presented. 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.

In Hong Kong, seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for all pregnant women, regardless of gestational age, to reduce the cardiopulmonary complications and hospitalisations associated with influenza infection. Tarrant et al<sup>1</sup> conducted a multi-centre, cross-sectional study to assess the prevalence of seasonal influenza vaccine uptake among 2846 pregnant women in Hong Kong. They found that only 49 (1.7%) reported receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine during pregnancy. The most common reasons for not being vaccinated were fear of side effects that could harm the foetus or themselves. Influenza vaccination uptake is extremely low among pregnant women in Hong Kong. The authors suggest that influenza vaccination uptake can be increased by providing more education to pregnant women about the importance of vaccination during pregnancy, informing them about current Centre for Health Protection recommendations about use of the vaccine during pregnancy, and having health care providers advise pregnant women to be vaccinated.

Yeasts belonging to the genus *Candida* cause infection (candidiasis) in susceptible patients. *Candida* infections have increased alongside advancements in medicine such as invasive procedures, the use of immunosuppressive drugs for organ transplants,

and the frequent administration of broad-spectrum antibiotics. *C albicans* is the most common cause of candidiasis and is a major cause of nosocomial infection with mortality that can exceed 40%. To counter the development of resistance to current antifungal agents, Wong et al<sup>2</sup> conducted a search for potential new lead compounds from natural sources. They found that the aqueous extract of the fruiting bodies of the mushroom, *Russula nigricans*, elicited >20% inhibition of *C albicans*. Further characterisation of the inhibitory compound(s) and the mechanism of action were conducted. This study demonstrates the enormous potential of natural products as lead compounds in the development of effective antimicrobials.

In Hong Kong, the HIV prevalence was 4.31% in 2008 among men who have sex with men (MSM) and has subsequently increased to 5.85% in 2014. Lau et al<sup>3</sup> conducted a case-crossover study to identify event-specific variables that are predictive of episodes of unprotected anal intercourse among MSM in Hong Kong who were inconsistent condom users. They found that availability and possession of condoms, condom negotiation, and planning to use condoms were event-specific factors related to lower likelihoods of unprotected anal intercourse with both regular and non-regular male sex partners. The authors suggest that HIV prevention strategies should consider these factors and target specifically on inconsistent condom users.

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 (<http://www.fhb.gov.hk/grants>). Researchers interested in the funds administered by the Food and Health Bureau also may visit the website for detailed information about application procedures.

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## References

1. Tarrant MA, Fong DY, Lee IL, et al. Prevalence of maternal immunisation with seasonal influenza vaccine 4in Hong Kong. *Hong Kong Med J* 2016;22(Suppl 7):S4-5.
2. Wong JH, Ng TB, Hui M, et al. Screening of aqueous and organic extracts from a variety of fungi for their ability to antagonise the pathogenic yeast *Candida albicans*. *Hong Kong Med J* 2016;22(Suppl 7):S26-9.
3. Lau JT, Gu J, Tsui HY. Event-specific risk factors predicting unprotected anal intercourse among Hong Kong men who have sex with men: a case-crossover study. *Hong Kong Med J* 2016;22(Suppl 7):S41-2.