

Editorial

Dissemination reports are concise informative reports of health-related research supported by the Health and Medical Research Fund (and its predecessor funds) administered by the Food and Health Bureau. In this edition, we present 11 dissemination reports of projects related to vision science, infectious disease, and cancer. 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.

Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is a complication of diabetes mellitus. Screening for DR is very cost-effective. In the Hong Kong public healthcare system, people with diabetes mellitus are screened at least once every 6 months. However, patients attending specialist clinics or a private general practitioner for diabetes care may not be screened. Li et al¹ aimed to identify the prevalence of DR in a sample of attendees at specialist clinics and factors that could disrupt the continuity of complication monitoring. They found that the weighted prevalence of DR and sight-threatening DR was 41.8% and 10.4%, respectively. The authors identified system factors that affected access to DR screening, which should be emphasised to improve the preventive care for those at high risk of avoidable vision loss.

Hepatitis E virus (HEV) is transmitted mainly through the faecal-oral route. HEV is genetically classified into at least seven genotypes (HEV 1-7).

In Hong Kong, hepatitis E is a notifiable disease and the number of cases has been increasing since 2001. Chan and Chan² reported the prevalence of HEV in different food items over a 2-year period and genotyped HEV from clinical cases over the same period. They provided molecular evidence suggesting that contaminated pig liver is one possible source of local human cases of HEV infections.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. Safe and effective treatments against triple-negative breast cancer (ie not expressing oestrogen receptor, progesterone receptor, or HER2) are in demand. Arginine is essential for the growth of a variety of tumours and depleting arginine leads to inhibition of tumour growth. Leung et al³ developed a PEGylated recombinant human arginase that was effective in a triple-negative xenograft model. The drug is safe and effective and should present fewer immunological problems compared with other bacterial-derived arginine-depleting enzymes.

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 editor



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References

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2. Chan MCW, Chan PKS. Surveillance of biologic sources of hepatitis E viruses in community. Hong Kong Med J 2019;25(Suppl 9):S17-20.
3. Leung SL, Ho MK, Lam YM, Chow HY, So YH, Leung YC. PEGylated recombinant human arginase as a drug for breast cancer. Hong Kong Med J 2019;25(Suppl 9):S28-31.