Immunization prevents an estimated 2.5 million deaths every year from a variety of communicable diseases, particularly childhood infectious diseases. As such, it is among the most successful and cost-effective public health interventions. However, millions of people remain unprotected. The Global Immunization Vision and Strategy developed by WHO and UNICEF is fighting vaccine-preventable diseases globally. A key strategy is the management of vaccination programmes and activities. In this issue, a paper from North Sudan reports on the implementation of the ‘reach every district’ (RED) approach for immunization, which found that the percentage of districts with ≥ 80% coverage for the third dose of diphtheria–pertussis–tetanus increased as RED implementation scores increased. From Qatar are 2 papers on measles surveillance which found that in 2008 only 28% of suspected measles cases were reported within 2 days and only 22% of physicians interviewed met the criterion for best practices for measles surveillance.

At the other end of the spectrum are chronic, noncommunicable diseases and presented in this issue are several papers addressing some of these diseases. From the Islamic Republic of Iran a study of depression in asthmatic patients using the Persian 28-item general health questionnaire reports that depression was significantly correlated with the number of asthma medications used, frequency of visits to the pulmonary clinic and frequency of hospitalizations. A study in Yemen determined the causes of blindness in diabetic patients and found that 39.3% had visual impairment and 15.7% were blind; cataract, proliferative diabetic retinopathy and diabetic maculopathy were the main causes. Another study from the United Arab Emirates evaluated the health-related quality of life (HRQOL) of people with diabetes using the Arabic version of the WHO quality of life questionnaire. The presence of complications was the variable most strongly associated with HRQOL.

WHO estimates that 346 million people worldwide have diabetes and this number may double between 2005 and 2030 if measures are not taken to curb the rise. Diabetes is not just a chronic disease to be lived with, it is a major cause of premature death; 3.4 million people are thought to have died as a result of high blood sugar in 2004, 80% of whom lived in low- and middle-income countries. Unfortunately, there remains a lack of knowledge about the risk factors for diabetes, as well as insufficient access to health services and essential medicines. Therefore, World Diabetes Day is held annually on 14 November to raise global awareness of the escalating rates of diabetes around the world and how it can be prevented and treated. Information about World Diabetes Day can be found at: http://www.idf.org/worlddiabetesday.

Letter from the Editor

In all, the Venezuelan medical journal has estimated a turnover of 2.5 million, and it was found that nearly half of the articles deal with the reduction of the burden of communicable diseases, and the remaining articles focused on noncommunicable diseases. The Global Immunization Vision and Strategy developed by WHO and UNICEF is fighting vaccine-preventable diseases globally. A key strategy is the management of vaccination programmes and activities. In this issue, a paper from North Sudan reports on the implementation of the ‘reach every district’ (RED) approach for immunization, which found that the percentage of districts with ≥ 80% coverage for the third dose of diphtheria–pertussis–tetanus increased as RED implementation scores increased. From Qatar are 2 papers on measles surveillance which found that in 2008 only 28% of suspected measles cases were reported within 2 days and only 22% of physicians interviewed met the criterion for best practices for measles surveillance.

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