The Ghana Medical Journal (GMJ), a product of the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), was first published in September 1962. The first edition contained a message from Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana and GMA patron, in which he expressed the hope that the “GMJ will afford the means of disseminating medical knowledge among yourselves and your colleagues throughout Africa and beyond”, and “May the pages of the Journal demonstrate the tireless efforts of medical men all over the world in the crusade against disease and ill health.”

Over fifty years later, it is fair to say that these lofty aspirations have not yet been met - the medical knowledge in the GMJ, especially before 2005, is not being widely disseminated. For instance, in a GMJ 2012 article on respiratory papillomatosis, an important cause of upper airway obstruction, despite an evident effort by the authors to cite local publications, there was no reference to J B David’s “Acute respiration obstruction in the child” published in the GMJ in 1963. The explanation for this omission is captured well in the Ga language that “No ko ni olele, ole!” – a reference to “unknown unknowns”, as famously stated by Donald Rumsfeld in 2002. So how do we improve access to our medical archives? The solutions are well known - The New England Journal of Medicine offers on-line access to its publications from 1812, the Lancet from 1823 and The BMJ from 1840. The GMJ offers online access from 2005, and I believe efforts are being made to increase access.

Until these improvements occur, we offer this compilation of the tables of contents of all published editions of the journal from 1962. It will enable researches browse the titles of past articles, and search for authors or words in a title. The hard copy version can be used even in the absence of electricity or internet access. There is currently no access to digital copies of articles before 2005. Therefore to read such articles, in Ghana currently, one would need to travel to the College of Health Sciences Library on the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital campus. Outside Ghana, there are incomplete collections in other locations as shown on page 138 and in the separate file “GMJ Holdings”. It is hoped that, in time, the College Library would be able to offer a photocopy service by telephone request, and also that other local journals and collections would be made more accessible.

We look forward to the day when other missing pieces of the solution will be provided in order to achieve the 1962 vision of a journal that will “demonstrate the tireless efforts of medical men all over the world in the crusade against disease and ill health.”

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INDEXES TO Vol. 1 and 2, 1962, 1963

INDEX TO VOL. 1, 1962  (Complete as Nos. 1 & 2)

A

Announcements  63
Meetings  61
Presentation to Osagyefo  55

B--E

BARNOR, M.A. A history of medical Societies in Ghana  4
Burning (or painful) feet syndrome, a case of  50
Compulsory membership of G. M.A. ? (Corresp)  57
Dodu, S. R. A., and Pobee, J. O. M. A case of burning (or painful) feet syndrome  50

EDITORIAL :
Acknowledgements  2
The Journal  2
Reader or writer?  30

F—H

FORSTER, E. B. A historical survey of psychiatric practice in Ghana  25
Ghana Medical Association, Compulsory Membership of (Corresp)  51
Ghana Medical Association, message to  1
HAWE, A. J. Looking back  15
Health programme for Ghana (1961-1970)  8

I—L

JOLLY, H. Neonatal problems in West Africa  46
KISSIEH, D. A. N. A brief survey of nursing in Ghana  22
LAWSONN, J. B. Maternal mortality in West Africa  31
Looking back._  15

M

Maternal mortality in West Africa  31
Medical Field Units, the history and work of  19
Medical Societies in Ghana, a history of  4
NELSON, A. F. The present system of registration of patients in government hospitals (Corresp)  55
Neonatal problems in West Africa  46
NKRUMAH, K. Message to the Ghana Medical Association  1
Nursing in Ghana, a brief survey of  22
O—P
Obituary—DE GRAFT-SOLINSON, J. F. T 64
ONORI E. The results of a mass campaign against yaws in the Volta Region of Ghana 36
Oroo, S. N. Compulsory membership of G. M.A.? (Corresp) 57
POBEE, J. O. M. see Done, S. R. A. and POBEE, J. O. M50
Psychiatric practice in Ghana, a historical survey of 25

Q—Z
Registration of patients. (Corresp) 54, 55
SCOTT, D. The history and work of the Medical Field Unit in Ghana 19
VOTYPKA-PECHA, J. A method for the registration of patients for statistical purposes (Corresp) 54
Yaws campaign in the Volta Region 36

INDEX TO VOL. 2, 1963
(Nos. I — 4)

A
Anaemia, Haemolytic and hereditary elliptocytosis with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency 29
Anaemia in children in West Africa 124
Aneurysm of the thoracic aorta, rupture of, into the left lung 68
Ascorbic acid levels in the urine of Ghanaians 150

Association News:
Annual General Conference, 5th 45, 77
Ashanti / Brong Ahafo Division (Elections) 122
Association of Physicians of West Africa, Meeting of 48, 121
Commonwealth Medical Conference, 7th, Report of 46
Eastern Division (Elections) 80
Physicians, Meeting of 49, 80
Regional news: 77
Visits 121
Western Division (Elections) 48
Auxiliary medical personnel in the U.S.S.R., Training and utilization of 159
BANERJEE, C., HATHORN, M., and SHARMA, V. N. Congenital absence of right pulmonary artery with bronchiectasis of the right lung 144
Blood parasites of man and animals in coastal Ghana 155
Blood and tissue parasites, portable field kit for detection of 115
Boi-DoKu, F. S. see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on 10
BRAUN, R. C. A fool's paradise (Corresp) 119
Bronchiectasis of the right lung with congenital absence of the right pulmonary artery 144
BUTIZR, R. J. G. Chronwde and Rheobase among normal Ghanaians, preliminary study (Abstract) 154

Cassava (Manihot utilissima), food poisoning due to 72
CHARTTERJEE, S. Complications on the practice of using "Kolie" around the eyes, in Northern Ghana 116
CHMEL, K. Post partum Vesico-vaginal fistulae seen in Tamale 73
Chronaxie and Rheobase among normal Ghanaians 154
Child development in Ghana, psychological studies of 154
Congenital malformations observed in Accra 134
Conjunctivitis and trachoma, measurement of, in a field survey at Yendi 155

DAGADU, M. Hypercarotenaemia in Ghanaians. II—Geographical variations in serum carotene levels 153
DAVID, J. B. Acute respiratory obstruction in the child (Some early experiences in Ghana) 138
De SARIO, V. Measurement of conjunctivitis and trachoma in a field survey at Yendi (Corresp) 155
Deaths: Amorin, I. J 49
DODU, S. R. A. see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on 10

Easmon, C. O. and LAHIRI, H. S. Volvulus of the sigmoid colon (A review of 29 cases) 62
EDGCOMB, J. H. and MORROW, R. H. Histopathological Characteristics of infectious Hepatitis in Accra, 1962/63 111
see MITRA, S. K., OMABOE, N. and Eoocomn, J 68
Eonsiaroi, G. M. The abnormal haemoglobins in West Africa 83
EDITORIAL-:
Accidental poisoning 50
Blood—"the life soul" 81
The Journal 81
Tuberculosis in the tropics 1
Water and malaria 123
Elliptocytosis, Hereditary, with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency and haemolytic anaemia. 29
Erythrocyte 0-6-P dehydrogenase and primaquine sensitivity: effect of vitamin C on hemolysis: 88
Evans-Anfom, E. Intestinal perforations (Some observations on aetiology and treatment) 99

F

Folic acid and vitamin B12 deficiency in man 93
Food poisoning due to cassava (Manilicq utilissima), an outbreak of 72

G

GHALI, W. W., see GILBERT, C., GHALI, W. W. and MAY, H. P. R 152
G.M.A.. Compulsory membership of 119
Ghana Medical School project, history of.. 34
GILBERT C., GHALL W. W. and MAY, H. P. R. Factors associated with neonatal jaundice in Accra. 152
GiRDWOOD, R. H. Deficiency of folic acid and vitamin B12 in man 93
Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency correlated with S. haemoglobin 131
Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency with hereditary elliptocytosis and haemolytic anaemia 29
GYANG, F. N. Preliminary report on levels of ascorbic acid in the urine before and after loading with ascorbic acid in Ghanaians 150

H

Haemoglobin S, correlated with glucos-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency 131
Haemoglobins, Abnormal, in West Africa 83
Hamartoma, hepatic, in a Ghanaian Child 104
HATHORN, N. Haemoglobin levels in pregnant woman in Accra 55
see BANERIEE, C., HATHORN, M. and SHARMA, C. N 144
see LEWIS, R. A. and HATHORN, M 131
HAWE, A. J. Carbon monoxide poisoning in Ghana 52
HENDRICKSE, R. 0. Anaemia in children in West Africa 124
Hepatitis, Infectious in Accra, 1962163, Histopathological characteristics 111
Hydatidiform mole and pulmonary emboli 106
Hypercarotenaemia in Ghanaians 153

I

Ileocystoplasty in the treatment of a case of contracted bladder associated with chronic tuberculous peritonitis 149
Jaundice, Neonatal factors associated with, in Accra 152

JOHNSON, W. see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, symposium on 10

KOCH, A. B. P. W. see Tuberculosis, pulmonary, symposium on 11
"Kolie" around the eyes, complications in the practice of using in Northern Ghana 115

LAMPTEY, M. O. An outbreak of food poisoning due to cassava (Manihot utilissima) 72
LEWIS, R. A. Primaquine sensitivity and erythrocyte G-6-PD deficiency: effect of vitamin C on hemolysis 81
- and HATHORN, M Glucose-6- phosphatase dehydrogenase deficiency correlated with S. haemoglobin 131

MANTE, K. S. Symposium on tuberculosis (Corresp) 158
MAY, H. P. R. see GILBERT, C. GHALI, W. W. and MAY, H. P. R. 152
MILLER, F. J. W. The recognition and treatment of tuberculosis in infants and young children 2
MITRA, S. K., OMABOE, N. and EDGCOMB, J. Rupture of an aneurysm of the thoracic aorta into the left lung. 68
MORROW, R. H. see E-DGCOMB, I. El. and MORROW, R. H. 111
MUNDY-CASTLE, A. C. Psychological studies of child development in Ghana (Abstract) 154
MURPHY, S. and SAI, FT, Hepatic hamartoma in a Ghanaian child 104

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH. PROCEEDINGS OF THE QUARTERLY SCIENTIFIC MEETING 108, 149

OMABOE, N. and EDGOMB, J. Pulmonary emboli and hydatidiform mole 106
- see MITRA, S. K. OMABOE, N. and ER:le-coma, J. 68

OTOO, S. E. N. The Training and utilization of auxiliary medical personnel in the U.S.S.R 159
- In Ghanaian setting (Corresp) 41

PARASITEMIAS OF PREGNANT WOMEN, PRELIMINARY REPORT ON 149
Peritonitis, Chronic tuberculous associated with contracted bladder, a case of, treated by Ileocystoplasty 149
Pictorial projection test among 103 Ghanaian females 154
POBEE, J. O. Typhoid fever in the Isolation Ward at Korle Bu 38
Post-mortem findings in infants and children dying in the Korle Bu Hospital 108
Pregnant women in Accra, haemoglobin levels in 55
Primaquine sensitivity and erythrocyte G-6-P. dehydrogenase deficiency: effect of vitamin C on hemolysis
Psychological studies of child development in Ghana 154
Pulmonary artery, Right, congenital absence of with bronchiectasis of the right lung 144
Pulmonary emboli and hydatidiform mole 106
Pyelographic and cystoscopic abnormalities with special reference to schistosoma haematobium infection 151

Q
QUARTEY, J. K. M. A case of contracted bladder associated with chronic tuberculous peritonitis and treated by ileocystoplasty 149
QUARTEY, J. K. M. and WOLFE, M. S. Preliminary report on clinical studies in young Ghanaians with Schistosoma haematobium infection with special reference to pyelographic and cystoscopic abnormalities 151

R
RATNESAR, V. C. Hereditary elliptocytosis with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency and haemolytic anaemia 29
— see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on 10
Respiratory obstruction, Acute, in the child 138
Rheobase and Chronaxie among normal Ghanaians 154
ROTHSTEIN, N. A portable field kit for the detection of blood and tissue parasites (Abstr.) 115
C.
— & THIERRY, V. Preliminary report on parasitemias of pregnant women at James Town Clinic, Accra 149

S
SAI, F T. Compulsory membership of the G.M.A 119
— The history of the Ghana Medical School Project 34
— see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on 10
— see MURPHY, S. and SAI, F. T. 104
Schistosoma haematobium infection in young Ghanaians with special reference to pyelographic and cystoscopic abnormalities 151
SHARMA, V. N. Symposium on tuberculosis (Corresp) 158
see BANERIEE, C., HATHORN, M. and SHARMA, V. N. 144
see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on 10
Sigmoid colon, volvulus of (A review of 29 oases) 62
SNOT, O. O. Compulsory membership of the G.M.A. (Corresp) 76
SPADONI, M. see Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on 10

T
THIERRY, V. see ROTHSTEIN, N. and THIERRY, V 149
Trachoma and conjunctivitis, measurement of in a field survey at Yendi 155
TRENT, R. D. Performance on a pictorial projection test among 103 Ghanaian females aged 16-21 years (Abstr.) 154
Tuberculosis in infants and young children, the recognition and treatment of 2
Tuberculosis, Pulmonary, Symposium on, 10, 158
Typhoid fever in the Isolation Ward at Korle Bu 38

U - Y

U.S.S.R., training and utilization of acpdiary medical personnel in 159
Vesico-vaginal fistulae, Post partum, seen in Tamale 73
Visits: Cross, R 121
Turner, W. D 121
Vitamin B12 and folic acid, deficiency in man 93
WOLFE, M. S. see QUARTEY, J. M. K. and WOLFE, M. S 151
YOUN, S. S. Congenital malformations observed in Accra (Post-mortem studies at the Korle Bu Hospital) 134
Post-mortem findings in infants and children dying in the Korle Bu Hospital, Accra (A preliminary report) 108

Vol 1, number 2 (concl. 1). December 1962

EDITORIAL Reader or Writer? 30

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Maternal Mortality in West Africa J. B. Lawson 31
Results of a Mass Yaws Campaign in the Volta Region E. Onori 36
Neonatal Problems in West Africa Hugh Jolly 46
CASE REPORT: A Case of Burning (or Painful) Feet syndrome —without obvious dietary deficiency S. R. A. Dodu and J. O. M. Pobee 50

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
1. A New Method of Registration of Patients J. Votypka-Pecha 50
2. The present system of Registration in Government Hospitals A. F. Nelson 55
READERS' FORUM: Compulsory Membership of G.M.A.? S. N. Otoo 57

ASSOCIATION NEWS
1. A presentation to Osagyefo (Patron of G.M.A.)
3. Announcements: Deaths
Col. S. H. Ali, Dr. I. F. K. Hughton 58

OBITUARY—Dr. J. F. T. de Graft-Johnson 64

Vol 2, Number 1, March 1963
EDITORIAL Tuberculosis in the tropics 1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
The Recognition and treatment of Tuberculosis in Infants and Young Children
F. J. W. Miller 2

A Symposium on Tuberculosis —
(Proceedings of the Staff meeting of the Korle Bu Hospital 10

CASE REPORT: Hereditary Elliptocytosis with Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase
deficiency and Haemolytic Anaemia V. C. Ratnesar 29

SPECIAL ARTICLE
The History of the Ghana Medical School Project F. T. Sai 34

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
1. Typhoid fever in the Isolation Ward at Korle Bu J. O. M. Pobee 38
2. In Ghanaian Setting — S. N. Ottoo 41

ASSOCIATION NEWS
1. G.M.A. Annual Conference 45
2. Report of the 7th Commonwealth Medical Conference 46
3. Meeting of Association of Physicians of West Africa 48
4. Announcements:
(a) Western Division of G.M.A. (Elections)
(b) Meeting of Physicians
(c) Death

Vol 2, Number 2, June 1963

EDITORIAL — Accidental Poisoning 50

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning in Ghana A. J. Hawe 52
Haemoglobin Levels in Pregnant Women in Accra M. Hathorn 55
Volvulus of the Sigmoid colon C. O. Easmon & H. S. Lahiri 62

CASE REPORT: Rupture of an Aneurysm of the Thoracic Aorta into the Left Lung
S. K. Mitra, N. Omaboe and J. Edgcomb 68
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. An Outbreak of Food Poisoning due to Cassava (Manihot utilissirna) M. O. Lamptey 72
2. Post Partum Vesico-Vaginal Fistulae seen in Tamale -- Karel Chmel 73

CORRESPONDENCE:
Compulsory Membership of the G.M.A. O. O. Snot 76

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. 5th Annual General Conference 77
2. Regional News
3. Announcements
   (a) Meeting of Physicians
   (b) Eastern Division (Elections)

Vol 2, Number 3, September 1963

EDITORIAL
(a) Blood—"the life soul" 81
(b) The Journal

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. The Abnormal Haemoglobins in West Africa G. M. Edington 83
2. Primaquine Sensitivity and Erythrocyte G-6-P Dehydrogenase Deficiency: Effect of Vitamin C on Hemolysis Roger A. Lewis 88
3. Deficiency of Folic Acid and Vitamin in Man R. H. Girdwood 93
4. Intestinal Perforation (Some observations on aetiology and treatment) E. Evans-Anfom 99

CASE REPORTS:
1. Hepatic Hamartoma in a Ghanaian Child Edna Murphy and F. T. Sai 104
2. Pulmonary Emboli and Hydatidiform Mole N. Omboe and J. Edgcomb 10

PROCEEDINGS:
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the National Institute of Health 8.: Medical Research (N.I.H.M.R.) 108

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Complications of the Practice of using "Kolie" around the Eyes, in Northern Ghana S. Charterjee 116

CORRESPONDENCE:
ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Visits
   (a) Dr. IV. D. Turner  121
   (b) Dr. R. Cross

2. Announcements
   (a) Meeting of Association of Physicians of West Africa  121
   (b) Ashanti/Brong Ahafo Division (Elections)

Vol 2, Number 4, December 1963

EDITORIAL  Water and Malaria  123

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
(1) Anaemia in Children in West Africa  R. G. Hendrickse  124
(2) Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency correlated with S Haemoglobin
    Roger A. Lewis and Michael Hathorn  131
(3) Congenital Malformations Observed in Accra.
    (Post Mortem Studies at the Korle Bu Hospital)  Silas S. Younn  134
(4) Acute Respiratory Obstruction in the Child (Some Early Experiences in Ghana)
    J. B. David  138

CASE REPORTS
1. Congenital Absence of Right Pulmonary Artery with Bronchiectasis of the Right Lung
   C. Banerjee, A. Hathorn, V. Sharma  144
2. A Case of Contracted Bladder Associated with Chronic Tuberculous Peritonitis
   and Treated by Ileocystoplasty  JKM Quartey  146

PROCEEDINGS
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the NI.H.M.R.

LETTER TO EDITOR
Measurement of Conjunctivitis and Trachoma in a Field Survey at Yendi
V. De Sario  155

CORRESPONDENCE
Vol 3, No 1, March 1964

EDITORIAL  Treatment of Sickle Cell Disease  1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

1. Inhibition of Sickling by Phenothiazines: Effect of Promazine  Roger A. Lewis  3
2. A Survey for the Vector of Yellow Fever in the Damongo Area, Northern Region, Ghana  George G. Burton  9
3. A Clinicopathological Investigation of 40 Cases of Uterine Fibroids  D. A. Ampofo  16
4. Intra-abdominal Malignant Lymphomas in Autopsies at the Korle Bu Hospital, Accra  Silas S. Younn  21
5. Internal Fixation with Primary Bone Grafting in the Treatment of Fresh Fractures of the Forearm Bones in Adults (A preliminary report). J. Yogaratnan 26

CASE REPORT:
A Case of Penile Amoebiasis  H. S. Lahiri  32

PROCEEDINGS:
1. Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (N.I.H.M.R.)  35
2. Conference of Association of Physicians of West Africa  35

CORRESPONDENCE:
Compulsory Membership of G.M.A.  D. A. Ampofo  51

ASSOCIATION NEWS:  52
1. Medical Education in Ghana
2. Extraordinary General Meeting
4. Social Activities
5. Representative Road Meeting
6. Annual General Conference (Preview)
EDITORIAL
(a) Accidents
(b) Resistant Staphylococci

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. The Physician's Role in Accident Prevention  J. McCarroll  58
                  C. A. Abrahams and E. Laing  67
3. Fatal poisoning from Ingestion of Benzene Hexachloride
                  Silas R. A. Dodu and Nicholas de Heer  75

CASE REPORTS - PARASITIC INFECTION
1. Carcinoma of the Bladder and Schistosomiasis haematobium
                  Martin S. Wolfe and John Edgcomb  81
2. Double Parasitic Infection of the Prepuce Associated with Carcinoma  J. Kori  84

PROCEEDINGS:
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the National Institute of Health and Medical Research  87

CORRESPONDENCE:
"Water and Malaria"  S. N. Otoo  100

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Sixth Annual General Conference  101
2. Election of Officers 1964-1965  101
3. Announcement  101

Death — Silas S. Younn

Vol 3, Number 3, September 1964

EDITORIAL  The Scourge of Measles  103

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
I. The Current Status of Measles Virus Vaccines and Some Preliminary Observations on Studies conducted in Ghana. George I. Lythcott and Martin S. Wolfe 104

2. Further observations on Factors associated with neonatal Jaundice in Accra
   C. Gilbert and P. Jilly 112

3. A Survey of Anaemia in Children in the Korle Bu Hospital, with Special Reference to Malaria
   P. Jilly and F. K. Nkrumah 118

CASE REPORTS:
1. A Case of Torsion of the Greater Omentum H. S. Lahiri 125
2. Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome J. Kovi and Edward N. Moser 128
3. Primary Carcinoma of the Liver and Post Necrotic Cirrhosis in a Ghanaian Child with Non-hepatic Bilharziasis. Francis K. Nkrumah 129

PROCEEDINGS:
1. Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (N.I.H.M.R.) 134
2. Seminar on Child Health (A Report) 138

CORRESPONDENCE:
"Refreshing the Memory" J. B. David 141

ASSOCIATION NEWS 142

Vol 3, Number 4 December 1964

EDITORIAL
1. The Ghana Medical School
2. "Social Paediatrics" 146

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. An Epidemic of Polyradiculoneuritis in Ghana (Guillain-Barre-Landry Syndrome)
   V. C. Ratnesar 148
2. Down's Syndrome (Mongolism) in Accra Susan B. G. de Graft-Johnson 157
3. The Tube Bioassay Technique in Tests to Evaluate Entomologically the effects of Simulium Control Operations in North West Ghana Gottlieb K. Noamesi 163
4. Non-Penetrating Abdominal Injury H. S. Lahlri 166

CASE REPORTS:
1. Comments on Three Unusual Cases of Acute Abdomen Associated with Pregnancy
   D. A. Ampofo  171
2. Migrant True Pancreatic Cyst.
   K. Chmel and J. K. Kyei  174

PROCEEDINGS:
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the N.L.H.M.R  176

LETTERS TO EDITOR:
1. "Under Fives Clinic"
   J. A. Lennox  179
2. Dental Treatment Given at Koforidua
   J. A. Richardson  181

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. The Ghana Medical School  183
2. Award of Non-Pensionable Allowance to Doctors
3. Annual General Meeting
4. Announcements a) Honours b) Death

Vol. 4 Number 1, March 1965

EDITORIAL
1. Favourite Prescriptions  1
2. Medical Memoranda  1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. A Survey of the Levels and Age Distribution of African Mortality—Based on Reports of Special Studies in Fifteen Areas—
   K. Saakwa-Mante  2
2. A Study of Communication and Comprehensibility of Public Health Information
   Richard D. Trent  9
3. Studies with TWSb (Astiban) and Recommendations for its Use in the Treatment of Urinary Schistosomiasis in Ghana.
   Martin S. Wolfe, Edward Moser and Richard Biek  14

MEDICAL MEMORANDA
1. Chloroquine Resistant Falciparum Malaria in Ghana
   H. P. Schwendier  20
2. A Study of Thioridazine hydrochloride (Melleril) on Chronic Schizophrenics
   E. B. Forster  22
3. A Psychological Test Battery for Predicting Performance of Students at the Nurses' Training College, Accra
   Richard D. Trent  24

CASE REPORTS:
1. Histiocytic Medullary Reticulosis Associated with Early Thymoma
   J. Kovi and V. C. Ratnesar  26
2. Sickle Cell Thalassaemia Treated with Promazine and Splenectomy
   Roger A. Lewis and H. S. Lahiri
ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. G.M.A. Delegation to Europe 33
2. Association of Surgeons of West Africa 33
3. Annual General Conference—April, 1965 34
4. Announcement 34
5. Obituary—Dr. Agnes S. Savage 35

Vol 4, number 2, June 1965

EDITORIAL
Phenothiazines in the Treatment of Sickle Cell Disease. 36

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Peculiar Subgaleal "Inclusion" Cysts E. Latunde Odeku 37
2. A Survey of the Levels of Age Distribution of African Infant Mortality Based on Reports of Special Studies in Fifteen Areas — II K. Saakwa-Mante 42

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Serum Cholesterol Concentrations in Pregnant Women from Southern Ghana C. J. Beardwood 53
2. Pathology of Burkitt's Tumour in Accra, Ghana J. Kovi and W. N. Laing 55

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Papers for Publication Martin Ware 60
2. Sarcoidosis F. D. Konotey-Ahalu and Geraint James 67

CASE REPORT:

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Annual General Conference 76
3. Calendar of Meetings—G.M.A. 78
4. New Arrivals 79

Vol. 4, Number 3, September, 1965
SYMPOSIUM ON BILHARZIASIS IN GHANA

EDITORIAL 80
1. A Historical Account — S. McCullough 81
3. Human Aspects — F. C. Grant 84
4. Some Clinical Aspects — J. K. M Quartey 85
5. Some Aspects of Pathology — E. C. Christian and W. N. Laing 86
6. Water-Use Habits and Bilharziasis — M. A. Odei 87
7. Distribution of Snail Hosts — Fergus McCullough 87
8. Ecology of Snail Hosts in Ghana — M. A. Odei 90
9. Preliminary Studies on Host-Parasite Relationship — Ilan Paperna 90
10. Irrigation and Land Reclamation Programme in Ghana — C. E. Tagoe 91

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Role of Chemical Pathology in Rural Health Investigations — J. C. Edozien 94

CASE REPORTS:
1. Primary Spinal Cord Melanoma and Phaeohromocytoma of Urinary Bladder Wall
   E. Lattaide Odeku and I. Jonata 11
2. A case of Marfan's Syndrome with Renal, Cardiovascular and Rheumatic Chest Abnormalities
   B. Kwaku Adadevol2 and D.A. Olatunbosum 117

PROCEEDINGS:
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the N.I.H.M.R. 121

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Announcements—
(a) Conference of Christian Medical Workers. 126
(b) Association of Surgeons of West Africa—Annual Prizes 126

Vol. 4  Number 4  December 1965

EDITORIAL:
Registration of Births and Deaths 127

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Acute Intestinal Obstruction in Accra, Ghana
   (A Review of 628 Cases) -- E. A. Badoe  128
2. Salmonella Agglutinins in Human Sera in Southern Ghana
   N. Rothstein, H.S. Sodhi and A. C. Eddie-Quartey  136
3. Knowledge of the Causation and Treatment of Malaria Among the General Public in Accra—
   Richard D. Trent  141
4. Pathology of Maternal Deaths in Accra — J. Kovi and W. N. Laing  146

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. A Study of Neonates and Neonatal Morbidity in the James Town Area — John Violet  150
2. Nutritional Aspect of Dental Health in Koforidua School Children
   T.A. Richardson and Alice Aryeetey  153
3. Histopathological Findings in Chronic Leg Ulcers  J. Kovi  156

CASE REPORT:
Treatment of Hyperkalaemic Cardiac Arrest by Timely Haemodialysis
   F. I. D. Konotey-Ahuulu and Gerald Anderson  15

MEETINGS:
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the N.I.H.M.R.  164

LETTER TO EDITOR: Hookworm Anaemia in a Neonate  R. C. Braun  169

Vol. 5, Number 1    March 1966

EDITORIAL
"Why Do Our Children Die?"  1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Diabetes in Accra
   Silas R. A. Dodu and Michael H. Hathorn  2
2. The Place of the Vacuum Extractor in a Ghanaian Obstetric Department
   Carmen M Rant  8
3. Insulin Resistance — A Study of Two Cases Treated with Prednisolone
   B. Kwaku Adadevoh and D. A. Olatunbosun  12

CASE REPORTS:
1. Achalasia of the Cardia — A Report of Two Cases  E. A. Badoe  17
2. Discordant Congenital Hydrocephalus in Identical Twins
   E. Latunde Odeku and Harry P. Elam  20
3. A Case of Congenital Mitral Atresia without Aortic Valve Anomaly  
S. E. Odamtten and W. N. Laing  25

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Inhibition of Sickling by Phenothiazines—Report of a Study Tour  Roger A. Lewis  29

MEETINGS:
Quarterly Scientific Meeting of the National Institute of Health and-Medical Research—Summaries... 33

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Eighth Annual General Conference (Preview)  35
2. 19th World Medical Assembly—A Report  36
3. Points from Meetings of G.M.A. Executive Council—Accra  37
4. News in Brief
   a) G.M.A. Gold Medal and Prize Award  33
   b) Royal Society of Health—Election of Fellow  38
5. Conferences  38

Vol. 5, Number 2  June 1966

EDITORIALS
1. Editor Ghana Med. J.  40
2. Opening Address  40

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Isolation of Herpes Simplex from a mother and Aborted Foetus  C. A. Abrahams  41
2. Drug Resistance of Tubercle Bacilli Isolated in Accra  H. S. Socihi and C. A. Salles  44

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Depression in West Africa  E. B. Forster  48
2. Paediatrics in West Africa today and tomorrow  W. R. F. Collis  54

MEDICAL MEMORANDUM:
Measles in Accra  Edna La Couse Murphy  58

CASE REPORTS:
1. Kartagener’s Syndrome in an African  C. Nwokolo and A. Abioye  61
2. Three cases of Rhinosporidiosis in Ghana  E. C. Christian and J. Kovi  63
3. Parathion poisoning in an Infant  Eunice Kuma  6

MEETING:
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. Acute Intestinal Obstruction in Accra W. A. C. Nanka Bruce 70
2. Grand Mal Convulsion during a Retrobulbar injection of 2% Xylocaine (Lidocaine) E.O.A. Ouaynor and C.O. Ouarcoopome 70

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Opening Address: Annual General Conference 71
2. Elections 79

OBITUARY: — Dr. N. S. Hodanu79

Vol. 5 Number 3 September 1966

EDITORIAL
Anti-rabies Campaign

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Typhoid Perforation of the Ileum in Korle Bu Hospital Accra E. A. Badoe 83
3. Dry Season Survival and Associated Longevity and Flight Range of Simulium damnosum Theobald in Northern Ghana G. V. Noamesi 95

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Modifications of Some Methods employed in the Separation of Human Haemoglobins using Agar-Gel electrophoresis J. Makunga 103

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Observations on Tropical Splenomegaly with Hypersplenic Anaemia in Ghana V. C. Ratnesar, M. Hathorn, H. Lahiri, S. Youn and J. Kovi ... 109
2. Pyogenic Meningitis H. S. Sodhi and L. Djorjevic 115

CASE REPORT:
Extraperitoneal Xanthogranuloma with Inguinal Lymph Node Involvement.
J. Kovi and E. Evans-Anfom. 118

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

1. Dental Society Party 120
2. Announcement: Conference of Christian Medical Workers 120

Vol 5, Number 4 December 1966

EDITORIAL

The G.M.A. and Private Practice 121

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

1. A longitudinal Ecological Study of One Hundred Consecutive Admissions to the Accra Mental Hospital
   E. B. Forster 123
2. Inhibition of Sickling by Phenothiazines: In Vitro studies
   R. A. Lewis 128
3. Some Observations on Schistosoma Mansoni Transmission at Wa, Northern Ghana
   M. A. Odei 133

SPECIAL ARTICLES:

1. Patterns of Disease as seen in Hospital
   Yaw Asirifi 137
2. The Education of Medical Students in the Social Aspects of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
   R. H. O. Bannerman 144
3. Making the Community Healthy
   F. T. Sai 148

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
EDITORIAL: Sickling in Vitro  

ORIGINAL ARTICLE:  
, Bacteriuria in Pregnant Women.  
(A bacteriological study of Antenatal cases attending Jamestown Clinic, Accra).  
L. Selcovic, H. S. Sodhi and C. B. G. Sinclair  

PRELIMINARY REPORT:  
The Distribution of Some Virus Antibodies in Accra, Ghana: A Preliminary Report  
S. Facsa and G. W. Amoah  

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:  
1. Etisul in Out-patient treatment of Leprosy  D. S. Chaudhury  
2. Myiasis from Cordyobia anthropophaga  F. D Konotey-Ahulu  

CASE REPORTS;  
1. Adult hypertrophic Pyloric Stenosis  H. K. Takyi and D. R. W. Haddock  
2. Multiple Tumours of the Glomus Jugulare and Caroticum in a Nigerian  F. D. Martinson and Latunde Odeku  
3. A Massive Subaponeurotic "Inclusion" Cyst  E. Latunde Odeku  

MEETINGS:  
1. Third World Conference on Medical Education (New Delhi, November, 1966.)  

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:  
"Inhibition of Sickling by Phenothiazines: in Vitro Studies"  

ASSOCIATION NEWS:  
Annual General Conference : Provisional Programme.  

Vol. 6, Number 1  March 1967  
Vol. 6, Number 2  June 1967
EDITORIAL:
Correspondence to Ghana Medical Journal 31

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Non-neoplastic lesions of the parotid gland  David H. Patey 32
3. Technique of Gastric Drainage in Relation to Post-Operative Chest Infection  Lade Wosornu 41

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Thalassaemia in a Ghanaian Family  F. S. Boi-Doku and Susan Ofori-Atta 45

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Maternal and Child Health Centre in Accra  S. Ofosu-Anwah 51
2. Professionalism and Urbanisation  S. R. A. Dodu 60

CORRESPONDENCE:
Etisul in Treatment of Leprosy  F. T. Sai 65

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
2. Obituary—Dr. Omtona Dr. Hoyte, 65

Vol. 6 Number 3 September 1967

EDITORIAL
1. "Beware, Malaria Kills!" 67
2. Subdural Haematoma — A Great Imitator 68

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Acute Appendicitis in Accra  E. A. Badoe
2. Intracranial Subdural Haematoma Pattern at Ibadan  E. L. Odeku and O. A. Idowu 76
3. Phosphohydrolase Activity in Alkaline Soluble Dental Collagen  David R. Mobbs 85

PRELIMINARY REPORT:
The Effect of Pre-Existing Trematode Infection on the
Establishment of Schistosoma Haematobium Larvae in Bulinid Snails - I. Paperna 89

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Interstitial Pregnancy: Report of a Case of 30 weeks Gestation and a Review of the Literature B. B. Obeng 91
2. Acute Appendicitis in a Right Inguinal Hernial Sac E. A. Badoe 95
3. Cysticercosis of the Brain S. E. Odamtten and W. N. Laing 97

CASE REPORTS:
1. Chronic Subdural Haematoma in a Ghanaian man A. B. Quainoo and H. K. Takyi 106
2. Chicken-Pox and Herpes Zoster in a Child Eunice Kuma 108

MEETINGS:
2. Tetanus — W.H.O. International Conference, 1966

CORRESPONDENCE:
Medical Practitioners and Dentistry in Ghana
T. A. Richardson 115

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Obituary—Dr. J. Hutton-Mills

Vol. 6 Number 4 December 1967

EDITORIAL
I. Indian Hemp Ingestion in Ghana 118
2. Doctors Pay 118

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Seasonal Changes in Vector Snail Populations in Different Habitats, and the Timing of Molluscicide Application Martin A. Odei 120
2. Indian Hemp Ingestion in Ghana F. K. Amarquaye 126
4. The Impact of Urban Life on the Diets of Rural Immigrants and its Repercussions on the Nutritional Status of the Community. 134

MEDICAL MEMORANDUM:
An Attempt to Assess the Prevalence of Epilepsy in Accra
SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Merging Patterns of Connective Tissue Disorders F. Dudley Hart 142
2. The Management of Acute Appendicitis—A Review of the Literature Lade Worsonu 145

CASE REPORTS:
1. Treatment of Filariasis Loa in a Pregnant Woman H. A. Addy 150
2. Two Unusual Cases of Intestinal Obstruction E. Q. Archampong 152
3. Pulmonary Infarction Following Air Flight in an Individual with Sickle Cell Trait R. A. Lewis and A. J. Howe 154

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Tenth Annual Conference of G.M.A. 157

ERRATUM: 157

Vol. 7 Number 1 March 1968

EDITORIAL:
1. The Royal Northern Hospital, London. N.7. 1
2. Postgraduate Medical Education 1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Sugar Malabsorption in Childhood Joseph Luder 4
2. The Post-Operative Period D. Geraint James and R. S. Morley 11
3. Depression as a Cause of Crime W. Lindesay Neustatter 14
4. The Handicap of Deafness Ian G. Robin 16
5. Chromosome Abnormalities and Disease C. W. H. Havard 21
6. Modern Contraception M. A. Pugh 32
7. Diminished Alcohol Tolerance After Injury Eric C. O. Jelvesbury 35
8. Total Excision of The Biceps F. P. Fitzgerald 37
9. Werner's Syndrome D. Geraint James, E. M. Kohner, and F. Clifford Rose 41

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
The Management of Acute Appendicitis—A Review of the Literature
1. H. K. Takyi 50
2. E. A. Badoe 50
ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. World Medical Association Press Release 52
2. Ghana Medical Association 52

Vol. 7 Number 2 June 1968

EDITORIAL:
1. Tenth Annual General Conference 54
2. Milk Production on Accra Plains 55

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Laboratory Studies of Smallpox Cases in Ghana. Pasca & Decario 56
2. Pulmonary and Cutaneous Fluid Losses in the Ghanaian in Korle Bu Hospital, Accra. E. A. Badoe 59
3. Studies on the Transmission of Schistosomiasis in Ghana II
   The Infection Rate of Snails at Transmission sites. I. Paperna 63
4. Retinopathy in Severe Chronic Anaemia. O. O. Akinkugbe & J. M. Aminu 71

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. An investigation of a precipitation Test for the Diagnosis of Infective Hepatitis.
   Haddock & Foli 77

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. A Pattern of Training for the Nursing Services in Ghana S. N. Otoo 79
2. Financing the Health Services in Britain Sir George Godber 87
3. The Hospital and the Pattern of Medical Practice in Ghana S. R. A. Dodu 96

PRELIMINARY REPORT:
1. Preliminary Investigation of the Bacteriology of Raw Milk Produced by Cows on the Accra Plains, Ghana. Abrahams & Laryea 100

CASE REPORTS:
1. A difficult double diagnosis Archampong 104
2. Emergency Management of Eythraemic Myelosis in Pregnancy Zatouroff, Cauri & Trowell 106
3. Diverticulum in the Male Urethra H. K. Takyi 110
ASSOCIATION NEWS:

1. Opening Address: 10th Annual General Conference  Mr. Justice Ollenu 112
2. Association of Physicians of West Africa; Annual Meeting  115

Vol. 7 Number 3 September 1968

EDITORIAL

Hereditary Qualitative and Quantitative Erythrocyte Defects in Ghana: An Historical and Geographical Survey.  118

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

1. A Survey for Haemoglobin Variants, Thalassaemia and Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency in Northern Ghana
2. Diagnosis of Subdural Haematoma  E. Q. Archampong 124
3. Socio-Economic Factors in Diseases of Infancy and Childhood  M. I. Ogbeide 129
4. Studies on the Transmission of Schistosomiasis in Ghana III
   Notes on the Ecology and Distribution of Minus Transcatus Rohlfsi and Biomphalaria Pfeifferi in the Lower Volta Basin.  I. Paperna 139

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:

1. Malabsorption with Black Urine
   D. R. W. Haddock & R. Y. B. Karikari 146
2. Intestinal Obstruction due to Ascariasis  J. O. Oluwasanmi 149

SPECIAL ARTICLES:

1. Prevalence of Dental Diseases among Mampong School Children and the Dental Health needs of Ghana  T. A. Richardson 153
2. The Place of the Private Clinic in an Urban Community  S. N. Otoo 159

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Improved Access to the Appendix  E. Q. Archampong 164

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

Commonwealth Medical Association Fourth Council Meeting;
22nd World Medical Assembly and Third Australian Medical Congress.
   J. L. Wosornu 165

Vol. 7 Number 4  December 1968

EDITORIAL:
ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Sudden, Unexpected, and Unexplained Deaths in Accra, Ghana  W. N. Laing  170
2. Interrelations of Glutamine and Ammonia Metabolism Among Several Organs in the Non-Acidosis and Metabolic Acidosis States  S. Kojo Addae  184
5. Mosquito Control in an Urban Environment with reference to the Anti-Mosquito Operations in Accra and Tema  W. A. Chinery  205

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Primary Pneumaturia in a Diabetic  J. K. Awadzi & D. R. W. Haddock 220
2. Recovery from Severe Compression Myelopathy due to thyroid Carcinoma  E. L. Odeku & T.O. Dada

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
I. Postgraduate Medical Education in East Africa  Bwogi Kanyerezi  226

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

OBITUARY: Dr. Charles Elias Reindorf  229

Vol. 8 Number 4 December 1969

EDITORIAL:
1. The State of the Association  219
2. Medical Education  219
3. Housemen's Registration Requirements in Ghana  220

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Medical Education  K. McL. Cobban 222
2. A Survey of Anaemias in the Medical Unit of Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra  Rebecca M. Norris  228
3. Measles at a Rural Hospital—A Retrospective Review of 125 cases  R. O Asante  234
4. Preventive and Therapeutic Irony of Neonatal Tetanus  M. I. Ogbeide  241
5. Reversible Dysphagia in Diabetes Mellitus  B.O. Osuntokun & T.I. Francis  246
6. Obesity in Medical Outpatients in Accra D.R.W. Haddock  251
7. The Pattern of Cardiovascular and Renal Causes of Obscure Deaths in Accra, Ghana  W. N. Laing  254
8. Biochemical Analysis of a Natural Product: A Honey Related Compound of Lipid and Non-Lipid character B. Y. A. Andoh 258
9. Surgical Management of The Double Uterus E. O. Akande 262
10. A Survey of Mosquito Breeding in Accra, Ghana, During a Two-Year Period of Larval Mosquito Control. 1. The Mosquitoes Collected and their Breeding Places W. A. Chinery 266

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Preliminary Trial of HB419 as One Stage Replacement Substiute for Tolbutamide In The Treatment of Maturity Onset Diabetes. S. R. A. Dodu 275
2. Is Hypertension Increasing In Ghana? Beatrice Amanor & Violet Martinson 279
3. Two cases of Anoxia and Cardiac Arrest From A Defective Anaesthetic Apparatus K.A. Oduro 281
4. Duodenal Obstruction in a Neonate in the Presence of Parasympathetic Ganglion Cells in the Auerbach Myenteric Plexus Takyi & Rajeshwar Nath 283

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Observations on Laboratory Results in Chemical Pathology. The Significance of Figures Quoted in Results T.D. Osafo 285
2. The Pattern of Disease In Ghana N. F. Hammond-Quaye 289
3. Genetic Counselling in Accra Sickle-cell Clinic F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 291

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. Anaemia Detection Programme Rebecca M. Norris 293
3. Accommodation in London Alan Gilmour, B. M. A. 295

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Special Convocation for First Graduates of Ghana Medical School 296
2. The Journey To Medical Graduation In Ghana J.O.O. Commey 296

Vol. 8 Number 3 September 1969

EDITORIAL:
1. First Graduates of Ghana Medical School 172
2. American Lunar Return-Trip 172
3. Civilian Government—Ghana's Second Republic 173

ORIGINAL PAPERS:
1. Can RNA Transfer Information from One Brain Into Another?—S. Reinis 174
2. Correlation of Brain Scanning with Other Neurodiagnostic Procedures
3. Some Observations on Adult and Newborn Lymphocytes in Culture
   — F. R. Engman 181
4. The Anatomical Basis for Inguinal Hernia in Ghana
   C. R. Dutta & M. Katzarski 185
5. A Plea for Respiratory Intensive Care Units in the Developing Countries. — S. A. Oduntan 187
6. Anaesthesia for Severe Maxillo-facial and Oral Injuries
   J. A. O. Magbagbeola 190
7. Public Health Importance of Some Helminth Parasites of Dogs in Accra Metropolitan Area—
   I. Frempong-Boadu 194

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
   J. O. Oluwasanmi & B. O. Osuntokun 196
2. Guillain-Barre Syndrome following a Typhoid-like Fever
   R. O. Addae 199

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Establishment of A Model Local Health Department in Rural Ghana—A Suggestion. — G. A. Ashitey 201

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR & CORRIGENDA:
1. Prevalence of Dental Diseases among Ghanaian Children:
   Fluoridation of water supply—J. H. Fremlin 204
2. Pre-sexing Spermatozoa—Conrad Chyatte 204
3. Corrigenda 205

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. 11th Annual General Meeting of the Ghana Medical Association
   — Presidential Address Dr. E. Evans-Anfom 205
2. Training Doctors in Ghana—Professor C. O. Easmon 208
3. Final MB, Ch.B. (Ghana) results 217
4. OBITUARY: Dr, J. N. Robertson 217

Vol. 8 Number 2 June 1969

EDITORIAL
1. Association of Physicians of West Africa: 3rd Annual Conference & Symposium 66
2. Speech by Commissioner for Health Dr. Eustace Akwei 67
3. Speech by President of Association Prof. M. Sankale 70

ORIGINAL PAPERS
1. The size of the Problem: A Survey of Liver Disease in Korle Bu Hospital, Accra.
   J.O.M. Faber, E.C. Christian 76
2. Viral Hepatitis: Some Clinical & Epidemiological features
   J, O. Mabayoje 84
3. Cirrhosis of Liver in Lagos including Bromsulphalein Retention in apparently Normal Nigerians
   D. Fend-Pearse & K. Danisa 89
4. Diagnostic Liver Function Tests  B. Kwaku Adadevoh 94
5. Amoebic Liver Disease  S. J. Powell 100
6. The Liver in Sickle-cell Disease: Clinical Aspects  F. Konotey-Ahulu 104
7. The Liver in Sickle-cell Disease: Pathological Aspects  A.F. Alli, E. A. Lewis 119
8. Cholelithiasis in Accra  E. Q. Archampong 134

ABSTRACTS OF OTHER PAPERS ON LIVER, ETC.
1. Epidemiological Aspects of Infective Hepatitis  F. T. Sai 140
2. Cirrhosis of Liver in Abidjan  Y. Amin 141
3. Jaundice in Infancy and Childhood with Special Reference to Primary Hepatic Disorder  O. Seriki 141
4. Primary Hepatoma  M. Sankale 142
5. Cholesterol Metabolism in Hepatoma  T. I. Francis 143
6. Recent Findings in Biological Studies on Hepatic Carcinoma  M Sankale, A.M. Sow, and O. Boo 143
7. Comparative Ultrastructure of Hepatoma in Rats and Sub-human Primates (Monkeys)  A. O. Williams 144
11. The Liver in Sickle-cell Disease: Pathological Aspects II  A.E. Boyo 148
13. Studies on Gastric Secretion in Sickle-cell Anaemia  J. L. Wosornu & F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 150
14. Some Obstetric Memoranda in Sickle-cell Haemoglobinopathy
   a. Successful Pregnancies in Sickle-cell Haemoglobin Korle Bu Genotype 151
   b. Thirteen Children from Twelve Pregnancies in Sickle-cell Thalassaemia  Bentsi-Enchill & Konotey-Ahulu 152
18. Cerebrovascular Accident in Accra  Prof Haddock 155
19. The Neuropathy of Pancreatic Diabetes Mellitus in Nigerians  B. Ostintokun 156
20. Electroencephalograms in Epileptics in Accra  B. Edoo, & Prof Haddock 157

DISCUSSION
Liver Disease in Africa  Chairman Prof T. Ogunlesi 158
ASSOCIATION NEWS
Ghana Medical Association 169. Association of Physicians of West Africa 170

Vol. 8 Number 1 March 1969

EDITORIAL:
1. Schistosomiasis in Ghana 1
2. Association of Surgeons of West Africa: Ninth Annual Conference and Establishment of West African College of Surgeons 2

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Some Aspects of Malignant Tumours in Western Nigeria V. Anomah Ngu & T. P. De V. Hendrickse 4
4. The "Simple" Slide Test for Sickling A. B. Raper 29
6. A Review of Mortality Rates in the Accident Service and its Relations to Modes of Transportation to the Hospitals K. G. Korsah 47

CASE REPORT:
Staphylococcal Food Poisoning R. O. Asante 51

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Medical Education in America E. A. Badoe 53

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Normal Values for Fourteen Blood Constituents in Young Adult Ghanaians in Accra. Bela Ringelhann, J. Maud Dagadu, H. S. Soda 58

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. World Medical Association, Inc. — Press Release 60
4. Annual Medical Conference — Kumasi 65

Vol. 9 Number 4 December 1970

EDITORIAL:
1. Onchocerciasis in Ghana 231
2. The West African Cholera Experience 232

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Clinical Onchocerciasis  C. O. Quarcoopome 234
2. Shistosomai Pancreatic Calcification  E. O. Oherin 247
3. Pilot Study of a New Oral Contraceptive in Ghana  Prof. F. T. Sat 253
4. One Trial Learning in Mice  Prof. S. Reinis 255
5. Insulin Resistance in the African  B. O. Osuntokun 259
6. The Siamese Twins of Ho  H. K. Takyi 263
7. Effects of Acute Temperature Changes  S. Addae & F. Addae 271
8. Tetanus and Artificial Ventilation  P. J. Tomlin 276
10. Intestinal Obstruction  Prof. E.A. Badoe 283
12. Ethnic Differences in Prevalence of Anencephaly  Prof K. K. Bentsi-Enchill 292
13. Dynamics of Induced Abortion and Social Implications for Ghana  D. A. Ampofo 295

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Case Report of Cholera  J.O.M. Pobee, F. Grant & C.A. Sales 306
2. Multilocular Cystic Disease of the Kidney  Z. O. Alabi, Prof V. A. Ngu & O. Seriki 309

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Blindness in Ghana and its Rehabilitation  S. Chatterfee 314
2. Lessons From History  G. A. Ashitey 316
3. Postgraduate Medical Education for Clinicians in Ghana  Lade Wosonu 318
4. Vice Chancellor's Address at a Special Congregation for First Graduates of the Ghana Medical School  Prof A. A. Kwapong 321

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. Intestinal Obstruction Due to Sand  R. C. Braun 326
2. Screening of Boys of Essipan Remand Home  M. K. T. Pun 326

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Obituary: Dr. A. A. Ayesu-Dwamena 327

Vol. 9 Number 3 September 1970

EDITORIAL:
1. Abortions in Accra 163
2. Communication Problems in Medicine 154
ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

1. 330 Cases of Abortion Treated at Korle Bu Hospital: The Epidemiological and Medical Characteristics
   D. A. Ampofo 156
2. Drug Resistance of Salmonella Isolated at Korle Bu Hospital
   H. S. Sodhl, Lucia Amenuvor & F. S. Boi-Doku 163
3. Clinical Syndromes of Central Atherosclerosis in Nigerians
   T. 0 Dada 167
4. Left Pulmonary Destruction by Tuberculosis in Children
   Issac Adetavo Grillo 173
5. Effects of Acute Temperature Changes on Renal Function in Residents
   of the Tropics: I. Haemodynamics S. Addae & F. Addae 178
6. Metal-containing Proteins in the Nigerian Tropical Ataxic Neuropathy
   B. O. Osuntokum & A. I O. Williams 184
7. Iliac Abscess from Suppurative Lymphadenitis.
   A. K. Mitra & Y. Adu-Gyamfi 187
   B. Y. A. Andoh 194
9. A Survey of Mosquito Breeding in Accra During a Two Year Period
   (Sept. 1964—Aug. 1966) or Larval Mosquito Control III.
   The Breeding of Aedes Aegypti W. A. Chinery 197
10. Symptom Formation in the African Patient E. B. Foster 201
11. Clinical Types of Goitre in Korle Bu Hospital 1965-1968
    J.T.Anim 205

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:

1. A Case of Laurence-Moon-Biedl Syndrome with Arachnodactyly In an African Negro.
   C. O. Quarcoopome 208
2. Sheehan's Syndrome Complicating Severe Post-Partum Haemorrhage
   E. O. Akande & Ademilola Adeluyibi 212
3. A Fatal Case of Fulminating Hepatocellular Jaundice Associated With Halothane Anaesthesia.
   J. A. O. Magbagbeola 215
4. A Case of Lithokelyphopedion.
   A. Onildde, E. O. Akande & T. Kolawole 217

SPECIAL ARTICLE:

The Importance of Research in Universities and other Institutions
Professor A. A. Kwapong

CASE REPORT

Neonatal Proptosis. C. O. Quarcooopome 224

ASSOCIATION NEWS

1. Report or, the Fourth Conference of Association of Physicians of West Africa, held in Dakar 1970. 226
2. Third International Congress of Psychosomatic Medicine in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. 227
3. Immunosiay of Gonodotrophs Kanolinska Sympsia on Research Methods in Reproductive Endocrinology. 228

Vol. 9 Number 2 June 1970

EDITORIAL:
ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

1. Clinico-Electroencephalographic Features of Status Epilepticus in Accra. B. B. Edoo 70
4. Probable Resistance to Bephenium in Necator Americanus Infection
   J. O. O. Commey & D. R. W. Haddock 94
5. Clinical Trial of a New Anti-Hookworm Drug Pheayiene-Diisothiocyanate (1.4) Jonit (R)
7. A Survey of Mosquito Breeding in Accra, Ghana, During a Two-Year Period of Larval Mosquito
   Control. The breeding of Culex (Culex) pipiens fatigans Wiedmann and Anopheles (Cella)
   gambiae Giles, in Accra. W. A. Chinery 109
9. Experience with Abdominal Injuries in the Civil War in Nigeria as seen in an Evacuation Hospital.
   T. F. Solanke, O. Bademosi, S. B. Oaptopan & F. B. O.Olatoregun 120
    R. O. Addae & A. K. Mitra 125
11. Radioisotope Studies in Congenital Haemoglobinopathies Bela Ringelhann 130
    L. A. Salaka 137

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:

Epilepsia Partialis Continua Caused by a Left Frontal Lobe Abscess.

SPECIAL ARTICLES:

1. The Several Ages of Medical Man Alan B. Raper 143
2. The Changing Face of Obstetric Practice in Ghana K. K. Bentsi-Enchill 146
3. Vocational Training for Practice in District Hospital E. A. Dation 148

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

1. 12th Annual General Conference, 1970 150
2. Fourth World Conference on Medical Education 151
3. The Third British Academic Conference in Otolaryngology, 1971. 151
4. XI International Congress 151

Vol. 9 Number 1 March 1970

EDITORIAL:

1. A Diagnostic Test For Hepatocellular Carcinoma 1
2. Measles 1
ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Fluid Requirements and Patterns of Central Venous Pressure in Septic Shock in Man. J. L. Wosornu 4
2. An Epidemic of Acute Conjunctivitis in Ghana S. Chatterjee, C. O. Quarcoo, A. Apenteng 9
3. Analysis of Deaths in the Department of Child Health, Korle Bu Hospital, 1968 S. Ofosu-Amaah & E. Brookman-Amissah 12
4. Autopsy Study of Measles in Ibadan, Nigeria A. Olufemi Williams & B. Osotimehin 23
6. Metronidazole (Flagyl) in Invasive Amoebiasis D. R. W. Haddock & J. K. Awadzi 31
7. Clinical Trial on Istonil (Dimethacrin) E. B. Forster 35

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
The Training and Utilization of Medical Auxiliaries S. A. Otoo 58

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. G.M.A. 12th Annual General Conference — The Physically Handicapped 64
2. Third International Congress of Psychosomatic Medicine in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 1971 64
3. G.M.A., 12th Annual General Conference — Provisional Programme. 65

Vol. 10 Number 4 December 1971

EDITORIAL:
The New Discipline of Occupational Health and Ghana

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
2. Computer Assisted Analysis of Data on 1,697 Patients Attending the Sickle Cell Haemoglobinopathy Clinic of Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana. Clinical Features, Rheumatism & Dactylitis Frequencies. F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 241
3. The Technical Exploration of the Effect of Silicone 'Skin' on the Pleural Membrane of Dogs Lade Wosornu 260
5. Thyrotoxicosis in Accra S. K. Owusu 269
7. Tetanus in Accra; Ghana J. O. M. Pobee 275
CASE REPORTS:
1. Infiltrating Carcinoma of the Transverse Colon in a Pregnant Patient of Thirty-two 283
2. Renal Glycosuria — A Diagnostic Problem Marianne Janost & D. K. Atubra 284

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Double-headed Monster Nii-Lomote Engmann & A.R.A Arkutu

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Physician Assistant Utilization in a Developing Country (Ghana) A. G. Boohene 294

ABSTRACT:
Effect of Acute Exposure to 71VC on Some Renal Functions in Normal Ghanaians
S. Kojo Addae 298

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. The Appendix in Ghanaians E. A. Badoe 299
2. The Vermiform Appendix in Ghanaians E. Q. Archampong 300

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Epidemiological Notes — 2nd Quarter 300
2. Other News 300
3. Obituary—Dr. Blankson-Hemans and Dr. T.A. Ankrah 303

Vol 10 Number 3 September 1971

EDITORIAL:
1. Post-graduate Medical Education in Ghana 168
2. Convulsions 168

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Convulsive Seizures in Ghanaian Children Yaw Asirifi 170
2. Childhood Tetanus: Control of the Spasms and a Case Report of an Unusually Short Period S. N. Brew-Graves 177
4. The Morphology and Distribution of Chromosomal Satellites in 100 Non-Consanguinous and Phenotypically Normal Individuals - Nii Lomote Engmann 193
5. Diabetes in Accra S. K. Owusu 203
6. A Radioimmunoassay for Human Placental Lactogen in Ghana E. A Alabor 205
7. Vagina/Tubal Ligation: An Effective Supplement to the Family Planning Programme V. S. K. Brobbey 208
8. Microsurgical trabeculectomy in Chronic Simple (Open Angle) glaucoma in Ghana S. Chatterjee 210
9. High Prevalence of Australia Antigen Positive Blood Donors in Accra
   A. K. Foil & G. Swaniker 214

CASE REPORTS
1. Systemic Sclerosis Masquerading as Leprosy in Ghana J. T. Addy 218
2. Anaesthesia For a Patient With Severe Bronchial Asthma and Multiple Allergy K. A Oduro 223

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
The Planning and Designing of Investigations J. L. Worsonu

ABSTRACT:
Aspects of Renal function in Sickle Cell Crisis S. Kojo Addae 230

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. New Appointments: Profile of Prof. Silas Dodo,
   Dean-elect of University of Ghana Medical School 232
2. University of Ghana Medical School MB Ch.B, Part II Examination, 1971 232
3. Award of prizes for 1969 and 1970 Essay Competition 233
4. Election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians 233

Vol. 10 Number 2 June 1971

EDITORIAL:
1. Rehabilitation in Ghana — K. G. Korsah 70
2. Medical Research in Developing Countries — F.I.D. Konotey-Ahulu 71

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Renal Electrolyte Metabolism Under Normal Conditions and during
   Acute Temperature Change in Sickle Cell Disease. S. Addae and F. Addae 75
4. The Vermiform Appendix in Ghanaians. M. Katzarski and R. Dutta „ 96
5. The Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Family Planning among
   the Women Teachers in the Primary Schools in Accra. D. A. Ampofo 100
6. Rehabilitation in Ghana. K. G. Korsah 108
7. Non-Tuberculous Chest Disease in Obstetrics in Nigeria. A. Om fade and E. O. Soloora 119
8. Cytological Changes in Epidemic of Acute Conjunctivitis in Ghana. F. T. Dako and H, S. Sodhi 123
10. The Pharmacology and Mode of Action of Chloroquine. I. A, Olatunde 143

CASE REPORT:
Massive Subgaleal Haematoma Complicating Head Injury in an Adult. A. Adalaye 150

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
SPECIAL ARTICLES:

   T. A. Richardson 156
2. Epidemiological notes: First quarter ending 31st March, 1971 162

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

1. Prophylaxis in the Haemoglobinopathies. 165
2. Occurrence of Dipetalonema Streptocerca in Ghana Macfie and Corson, 122
3. Medical Auxiliaries ... 166

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

1. New appointments ... ... ... ... ... 166
2. Other appointments ... ... ... ... ... 166
3. Fifth Annual Conference of Physicians of West Africa 166
4. Thirteenth Annual General Conference, 1971 ... 166

Vol. 10 Number 1 March 1971

EDITORIAL:

1. Challenge of the Cholera Epidemic to West Africa 1
2. Pyogenic Meningitis 2

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

1. Forty-seven Cases of Pyogenic Meningitis in Adults in Korle Bu Hospital, Accra
   D. R. W. Haddock 3
2. Rheumatic Heart Disease in Children in Developing Countries
   A. U. Antia, C. E. Effiong and S. Reddy 9
3. Effect of Acute Heat Stress on Some Renal Functions in the Sickle Cell Patient
   S. Addae and F. Addae 14
4. Stillbirth and its Prevention in Ghana D. A. Ampofo 23
5. Gastro-intestinal Manifestations of Burkitt Tumour O.O. A. Ajayi 30
6. Respiratory States of Nigerian Patients During Anaesthesia
   and in the Immediate Post-operative Period S A Oduntan 34
7. Biochemical Diagnosis in Sickle Cell Disease W. A. Isaacs 40
8. Experiences with the "Penthane Analgizer" K. O. Oduro 43
9. Spontaneous Haemoperitoneum E. Q. Archampang 47
10. Forensic Attitudes in the Delivery of Mental Health Care in Ghana. E. B. Forster 52

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Stevens-Johnson Syndrome Following Anticonvulsant Therapy in Penetrating Head Injury
A. Adeloye, G. O. Alabi, J, B, Fanillus and E. L. Odeku 56

CASE REPORT:
Oculoauriculovertebral Dysplasia F. K. Nkrumah 60

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. Medical Auxilliaries 62
2. Renal Function in the Tropics 63

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Seminar on "Health and the Press" 64
2. Association Activities in March, 1971 67

Vol. 11 Number 4 December 1972

EDITORIAL:
1. Dr. Margaret J. Field and Psychiatry in Ghana 320
2. Lassa Fever — a New Disease 321

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. A Clinical Study of Septic Shock Lade Wosorna 322
2. Infantile Gastro-enteritis F. F. T. Djanbor 325
3. In Vitro Stimulation of Human Lymphocytes by Combinations of Antigens and Allogeneic Cells S.E. Odamtten 332
4. Tuberculosis of the Genitourinary Tract E. D. Yeboah 342
5. Renal Disease in Medical Admissions in the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital E. B. Larbi & D. R. W. Haddock
6. The Human Haptoglobins F. Ofosu 354
7. A Survey of Accuracy in the Routine Chemical Pathology Laboratory of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in 1969 T. D. Osafa 360
SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Care of the Seriously Ill Patient J. F. Searle 413
2. Acupuncture-L The First Questions Lade Wosornu 415

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Successful Caesarean Section After Death From Millary Tuberculosis L. N. Ajabor 420

ABSTRACTS:
1. Peripheral Handling of a Double-chain Proinsulin Intermediate in the Rabbit J. Kurantsin-Mills 422
2. Human Coenurosis — The First Reported Case in Ghana R. O. Addae 424

CORRESPONDENCE:
1. Poliomyelitis and New Treatment J. Akuteth Lamptey 425
2. Diagnosis of Torsion of the Testis A. A. Akiwumi 426

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Epidemiological Notes 427
2. OBITUARY — Margaret Joyce Field 428
3. M.D. (London University) 430

TENTH ANNIVERSARY 1962-1972
Vol. 11 Number 3 September 1972

EDITORIAL:
1. Tenth Anniversary of Ghana Medical Journal 198
2. The Commonwealth Medical Association ... 199
3. Ischaemic Heart Disease in Ghanaians 201

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Clinical Aspects of Ischaemic Heart Disease (IHD) in Ghanaians.
   S. R. A. Dodu 203
2. Serological Positive Test for Infectious Mononucleosis amongst Nigerians.
   B. K. Adadevoh, S. A. Sobulo and A. O. Oghimi 203
3. Water and Electrolyte Transfer by Human Colonic Mucosa Studied in Vitro -
   A Preliminary Report. E. Q. Archampong 219
4. Tissue Inhibition of Human Erythropoietin. I.
   Inhibition of Human Erythropoietin by Hypotonic Tissue
5. Chloroquin-Induced Sequential Disruption of Central Respiratory Control
   Mechanisms G.A. Varianian & M. Chinyanga 235
6. Aspects of Renal Function in Sickle Cell Crisis. S. Kojo Addae 242
7. Gastroduodenal Perforation in Accra. E. A. Badoe 248
   E. O. Nkposong 252
9. Toxoplasmosis in Ghana. C. O. Quarcoopome 256
10. The Incidence of Gallstones as seen at Autopsy in the Korle Bu
    Teaching Hospital, Accra. J. T. Anim, E. C. Christian & E. A. Badoe 259
11. Epilepsy and Behaviour. C. C. Adomakoh 262
    G. A. Ashitey, F. K. Wurapa & D. W. Belcher 266

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Balanced Polymorphism and Hereditary Qualitative and Quantitative Ery-
   throcyte Defects. F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 274
2. The Circulating Lymphocyte: Some Past and Present Concepts,
   S. E. Odamttten 285
3. Korle Bu Hospital Anaemia Clinic - Review of the First Six Months,
    Marianne Janosi & A. A. Bruce-Tagoe 294

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
2. Nasal Predilection of Pterygium---A New Explanation M. W. Ansari 302

ABSTRACTS:
1. Electrophoretic Characterization of Glucose-6--Phosphate Dehydrogenase
   (G-6-PD) Enzyme in Ghana. S. K. Owusu & A. Opare-Mante 304
2. The Pathogenesis of Sickle-cell Crisis in Ghana.
   F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 304
3. Sodium and Potassium Distribution between the Erythrocyte and
   its Environment in Sickle cell Anaemia Subjects.
   J. Kurantsin-Mills & S Kojo Addae
4. Drug Abuse among Ghanaian Medical Students.
J. Ofori-Akyeah & R. A Lewis 307
5. Implantable Pleural Membrane. Lade Wosornu 307

BOOK REVIEWS:
1. A. G. Shaper and others' "Medicine in a Tropical Environment".
   F. F. T. Diabanor 308
2. B. G. Maegraith and H. M. Gilles'
   "Management and Treatment of Tropical Diseases."
   F.F.T Diabanor 309

CORRESPONDENCE:
1. Vibrio Cholerae Isolated from Domestic Fowl. C. A. Salles 309
   R. O. Addae 310

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Epidemiological Notes 311
2. Reprints from 1959 News Bulletin of GMA
3. Final MB Ch.B. (Legon) Results 314
4. G.M.A. Essay Prize for New Doctors 314
5. To B.A. and Back. Doctor in the Rural Area. J. O. M.Pobee 315

Vol 11 Number 2 June 1972

EDITORIAL:
Anaemia and Gram-negative Bacterial Infection 98

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Evidence for the Immunological basis of Anaemia of Acute Gram-
   negative Bacterial Infection: A review. R. K. G. Assoku 101
2. Engagement of the Fetal Head in Ghanaian Primigravidae: Its
   Prognostic Significance in the Course and Outcome of Labour.
   C.A. Klufio and Charlotte Gardiner 109
   A. R. A. Arkutu 114
4. Cancer of the Cervix — a Review of Surgical Material at the Korle
   Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra for the Years 1966-1970,
   J.T. Anim & Laing 118
5. Anaemia and Anaesthesia. A Brief Discussion. J. S. Searle 122
6. Autogenous Skin as the New Lining for the Pleural Cavity. Lade Wosornu 126
8. A Review of Cancer of the Stomach as Seen in Korle flu Teaching
10. Review of Dental Health Problems in Ghana. T. A. Richardson 141
12. The Prevalence of Motor Disorders in Phenothiazine Treated Psychotics in Mental Hospital. C. C. Adomakoh 149
13. Headaches as Presenting Symptoms (Amongst Others) in First Psychiatric Consultations in Ghana. E. B. Forster 153

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Retinol in Cholesterol biosynthesis: Effect on Lipid Metabolism. J. Maud Kordylas 162
3. The Tyranny of Fashion in Medical Journals F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 178

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Phaeochromocytoma - Clinically Diagnosed in a Ghanaian Woman Jonathan Addy 183

CORRESPONDENCE:
Myasis fly Larvae in the "Liver" of an Adult Ghanaian. W.A. Chinery and E. C. Christian 186

BOOK REVIEW:
Professor Akinkugbe's "High Blood Pressure in the African". J. O. M. Pobee 187

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. 14th Annual General Conference 188
2. Opening Address by the Commissioner for Health 189
3. Sixth Biennial Conference Meeting 191
4. OBITUARY — E. Ransford Asiedu192
5. Epidemiological Notes 194
EDITORIAL:
1. The Danfa/Ghana Rural Community Health Project 1
2. In Vitro and in Vivo Sickling of Erythrocytes 2
3. Vitamin-A in Cholesterol Biosynthesis and Pathogenesis of Atherosclerosis 3
4. An International Sickle-cell Crisis 4

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. The Danfa Ghana Comprehensive Rural Health and Family Planning Project — A Community Approach
   F. T. Sal, F. K. Wurapa & E. K. Quartey-Papafi 9
2. The Danfa/ Ghana Comprehensive Rural Health and Family Planning Project—A Preliminary Report
   A. K. Neumann, J. Prince, F. E. Gilbert & I. M. Lourie 18
3. An Evaluation of Smallpox Vaccination in Mothers and their Newborn infants in Accra
   F. K. Wurapa, Sheila Amoah, Lucy Faber & S. Pacsa 25
4. The Sickling of Erythrocytes—A Study of the Effects of Adrenalin and Hydrocortisone on the Sickling Phenomenon
   F. F. T. Djabanor, 29
5. Australia (Au(1) Antigen in Blood Donors in Madan. Nigeria. I. Prevental and Genetic Studies
   J. A. Smith, T. I. Francis & N.O. Uriri 43
6. Some Aspects of Hypertension in a General Medical Clinic in Accra
   D. R. W. Haddock, J. B. K Allotey & E. K. Akpebu 49
7. Bronchial Asthma at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital A Preliminary Report
   J. T. Anim & B. B. Edoo 59
8. Non-obstetric Injuries to the Female Genital Tract A. Onifade 61
9. Mental Hospital Patients—A Castle Road Profile C. C. Adomakoh 65

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Retinol in Cholesterol Biosynthesis J. Maud Kordylas 71

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. A Case of Pseudocyesis J. J. Lamptey 82
2. Male Hormone Producing Tumour (Arrhenoblastoma) in a Young Woman
   D. A. Ampofo, E. C. Christian & J. B. Wilson
3. Hypoglycaemia Associated with Primary Hepatoma
   Marz'a Hagan & J. IL Asafu-Adjaye 88

ABSTRACTS:
1. Experiences with Chloroquine as a Local Anaesthetic
   H. K. Takyi, H. M. Chiyanga, K. A. Oduro & G. A. Vartanian 90
2. Effect of Acute Change From Room Temperature (29 °C to 20 °C) on some
Renal Functions in Sickle-cell Disease  S. Addae & F. Addae

CORRESPONDENCE
1. B.C.G. Vaccination of Neonates and School Children  Sheila Amoah  92
2. Health Education in Ghana  M. A. Odei 92
3. Re: The International Reference Centre for Information of Psychotropic Drugs  E. B. Foster 93
4. Alleged Intestinal Infarction Sickle-cell Trait During Flight  Colonel R. O. Adder 93

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Epidemiological Notes  95
2. G.M.A. Annual Conference  96

Vol. 12 Number 1 March 1973

EDITORIAL:
1. The Scope of Family Health  1
2. The Growth of School Children in Accra  3
3. Comparative Medicine  4
4. The Medical and Dental Decree 5

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Growth of School Children in Accra  7  S. Ofosu-Amaah & M. Katzarski
2. Severe Anaemia Associated with Malaria  F. K. Nkrumah 17
3. Potential Research Areas of Immediate Applicability in Advancement of Family Health Activities within the Tropical African Region  F. T. Sai  21
7. Preliminary report on the use of 5—Carbamoyl 5-H-Dibenzo (BF) Azepine(Tegretol) in Refractory Epileptics.  C. C. Adomako 48
8. Shigella Serotypes Isolated in Accra Ghana  S. N. Afoakwa  50

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Contributions to Comparative Medicine Biomedical Models of Human Haematologic Disease  R. K. G. Assoku 66
2. Suggestions for re-organization of the Maternal Health Services of Accra  S. N. Otoo 78
MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Cystic Hygroma in Ibadan O. O. Ajayi104

CASE REPORT:
Sudden Death in a Case of Cor Trilocu!are Biventriculare (Conunon atrium) J. M. Blankson 107

BOOK REVIEWS:
1. Isam, R. Nazer "Induced Abortion" a hazard to public health D. A. Ampofo 111
2. Cicely D. Williams and Derrick B Jelliffe, "Mother and Child Health" S. Ofosu-Amaah 112

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. The Medical and Dental Decree 113
2. The question of Referrals 115
3. Epidemiological Notes 120
4. American Cancer Society's Second National Conference on the Colon and Rectum 121
5. Part 1 MRCP Examination 121
6. Annual General Meeting of the Ghana Medical Association 122

Vol. 12 Number 2 June 1973

EDITORIAL:
1. Drug-induced Disease 123
2. Caesarean Section 125
3. Dog Menace in Accra 126
4. Association Conference 128

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Drug-induced Disease C. W. H. Havard 130
2. Retrospective Survey of Caesarean Sections at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra C A Klufio 142
3. Outcome of Pregnancy and Labour Following Previous Caesarean Section at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital C A Klufio & K K Bentsi-Enchill 150
4. Severe Neonatal Jaundice: Analysis of Possible Associated Factors in Infants from Accra F. K. Nkrumah 160
5. Clinical Experience With Dihydroergocristine-Reserpine-Clopamide Combination (Brinerdin) in Ghanaian Hypertensives J. K. Bandoh 160
7. Typhoid in Accra: A Follow-up Study of Typhoid Fever Patients at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital F K Wurapa 184
8. Potassium Losses in Typhoid Peritonitis in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital  
   E. A. Badoe 188
9. Leptospirosis in Ghana  
   H. Kinebucht & S. N. Afoakwa 190
10. The Kidney in Sickle Cell Disease I: Renal Haemodynamics  
    S. Kojo Addae
11. The Kidney in Sickle Cell Disease II: The Kidney and the Sickling Phenomenon  
    S. Kojo Addae
12. Preliminary Observation on the Preservation of Microfilariae of Acanthocheilonema Persians (Manson, 1891) at Sub-Zero Temperature  
    W. A. Chinery & N. A. Atiemo 203
13. Intramyocardial Conduction Velocity Being a Factor Determining the Amplitude of the QRS Complex of the Electrocardiogram  
    H. Mapfumo Chiyanga and G.A.Vartanian 205
    Lade Wosornu & S.A-W Ardeyflo 208

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Clinical Significance of Serum isoenzymes: A Brief Review  
   R. I. A. Fenuku 215
2. A Simple Laboratory Diagnosis of Meningitis: The Causative Organism and Therapy  
   G. L. N. Chew 219
3. Diagnosis of Beta Thalassaemia in Malarious Environments  
   C. F. Folayan Essan 222
4. Acupuncture - III  
   Lade Wosornu 225
5. Dog Menace in Accra: Some Reflections and Exhortations Regarding Corrective Measures in the Kaneshie Suburban Region.  
   H. M. Engmann & Nil- Lomote Engmann 227

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Remission of Severe Diabetes Mellitus in a Ghanaian  
   S. K. Owusu 232
2. Some of the Types of Breast Diseases at Korle Bu Hospital During the period 1968 -1971 with Emphasis on Breast Cancer - A Preliminary Study  
   M. Aidoo 233

ABSTRACT:
Alterations in the Membrane Structure and Transport Properties in Sickle Cell Erythrocytes  
J. Kurantsin-Mills, M. Kudo and S. Kojo Addae 237

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
1. Tyranny of Fashion in Medical Journals 238
2. Medicine in Modern Sports 238
3. Biochemical Diagnosis of Phaeochromocytoma 239

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Ghana Medical Association Essay Prize 240
2. University of Miami 240
3. The World Medical Association 241

Vol. 12 Number 4 December 1973

EDITORIAL:
1. Report of Committee Appointed to Investigate Hospital Fees 345
2. Urea Clearance and Urine flow rate 347

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Relationship between urea clearance and urine flow rate in young adult Nigerians. Oyedidran, Akinkugbe, Adadevoh 348
2. The kidney in sickle-cell Disease V: Clinical Manifestations. S. K. Addae 352
3. Effect of Oral sulphonylureas, Blood Glucose and Insulin. B. K. Adadevoh and Bolodeoku 360
6. Radiotherapeutic Management of cancer of Cervix in NigeriaJ. l. Kofi Duncan 374
8. Excretory Urography to Demonstrate the Renal Outlines in Nigerians. A. A. Obisesan, Ofomuyiwa, T. M. Kalatvole and S. P. Bohrer 391

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Organ-Specificity and Sensitivity of Serum Enzyme Tests in Clinical Diagnosis : Current Concepts, R. I. A. Fenuku 403

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Combination of Typhus and Typhoid Fever in the same patient? R. O. Addae, C. N. Karel 418
2. Pulmonary Thromboembolism in Nigerians and Report of two cases. A. O. Afonja 422

CASE REPORTS:
2. A case of a Cyst Associated with the Caecum and Ascending Colon M. Aidoo & J. K. M. Rawlinson 428

CORRESPONDENCE:

PHARMACOLOGICAL NOTES:
The Rapid Reduction of blood pressure. G. L. Boye. 432

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Medical and Dental Council elections 434
2. International Symposium on Medical Ethics in a Changing World 434
3. OBITUARY: Dr. Ebenezer Coleman Daniels 435
Vol. 13 Number 1 March 1974

EDITORIAL:
Viral Hepatitis  1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
2. Blood Volume and Plasma Volume In Normal And In Anaemic African Males. A. C. Chwkwuemeka  8
3. Seasonal Variation in Urine Output and Electrolyte Excretion in Adult Nigerians. O. Elebute  12
4. Toxoplasmosis in the Aetiology of Uveitis in Ghana. C. O. Ouarcoopome  17
5. Analysis of 300 Consecutive Cases of Infertility with a 5-year Follow-up. B. B. Obeng  20
6. Cancer of the Pancreas. C.S. Grant and Lade Wosornu  27
8. Doxepin and a Combination of Amitriptyline and Chlordiazepoxide in the Treatment of Anxiety-depression Syndrome —A Double Blind Trial. J. C. Ebie  33
10. Starch-gel Electrophoresis of Tissue Lactate Dehydrogenase R. I. A. Fenuku  39
11. Post Anaesthetic Headache in Nigerian Females J. A. O. Magbagbtola  41

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Circulating Proinsulins and Insulins. J. Kurantsin-Mills  57
2. The Need for Closer Collaboration between the Teaching Institutions of Health Sciences and Ministries of Health for the Development of Health Services in Africa. J. K. E. Amorin  78

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Unilateral Hyperplasia of The Mandibular Condyle. R. Ofori-Gyebi  82

CASE REPORTS:
1. Simmend's Disease in an African I.G. Jones and M.N. Lowenthal  85
2. Fatal Balantidiasis E. C. Christian  86

CORRESPONDENCE:
Myxoedema in the African M. N. Lowenthal  89

PHarmacological NOTES:
The Chemotherapy of Malaria  R. A. Lewis  90

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Annual General Conference  92
2. Congratulation — Dr. E. Q. Archampong  93

Vol. 13 Number 2  June 1974

EDITORIAL:
1. Renal Function in the Tropics  94
2. The Ghana Institute of Clinical Genetics  95
3. Difficult Times  97

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. An Approach to Illness Measurement in a Rural Community
2. Sudden Loss of Vision After Caesarian Section:
A Syndrome of Acute Ophthalmic Artery Occlusion.  C. O. Ouarcoopome  105
3. Effect of Graded Doses of Histamine Acid Phosphate on Gastric Acid Secretion.
Lade Wosornu  118
S. K. Addae  121
5. Anorectal Anomalies.
E. A. Badoe  126

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Planners, Planning and Evaluation of Health Services.
J. M. Blankson and Y. Asirifi  134
3. Effect of Intra-Uterine Copper on the Uptake of Progesterone-
Olayemi Ladeinde and Kwaku Adadevoh  141
4. Post Partum Family Planning Advice. G. L. N. Chew  144

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL NOTES:

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Address by the Commissioner for Health, Lt.-Col. A.H. Selormey, at the Opening of the x6th Annual General Conference of the Ghana Medical Association at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.  148
2. Congratulations Dr. S. K. Owusu and Dr. F. I. D. Konote - Ahulu  151
3. International Conference on the Physician and Population Change  151
4. Resolutions of the International Colloquium on Alpha-Fetoprotein held in Nice, France  153
Vol. 13 Number 3 September 1974

EDITORIAL:
1. Evaluation of retinal function 154
2. Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency and Disease - Causation in Ghana 155

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Clinical Electroretinography (ERG) in Ghana. H. Yamda, C. O, Quarcoopome and A. Hosaka 158
2. Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency in Causation of Disease in Ghana. S. K. Owusu 68
4. Immunofluorescent study of Keloids. J. O. Oluwasanmi and O. O. Ajayi 177
6. The use of modified Fat Blend formula Milk studies in the premature baby Unit, Korle Bu Hospital. A. G. Cardiacus and C. A. Reindorf 184
7. Studies of the presence of Carcinogenic Hydrocarbons in Smoked Fish. C. K. E. Quayson, C. J. Graham and G. C. Esh 188

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Mucoceles of the paranasal sinuses in Nigeria. F. D. Martinson 192
2. Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia. I. A. Grillo Margaret Richardson 198

CASE REPORTS:
1. Granular Cell Tumour (Myoblastoma) of the larynx. O. K. Amoah 209
2. Primary Cancer of the Male Urethra in Ibadan. T. A. Junaid & E. 0, Nkposong 211

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
2. Annual General Meeting 223
3. OBITUARY—S.W. Cooper 225

Vol. 14 Number 1 March 1975

EDITORIAL: 1. Conquest of a Disease 1
2. Cancer Immunotherapy 2

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
2. Clinical Picture of Guinea Worm Disease in Southern Ghana.  

3. Post Abortal Contraception.  
D. A. Ampofo 15

4. Spleen Weight Indices.  
A. S. David-West 19

5. Is Learning Affected by Chloroquine?  
Adukwei Hesse & G. A. Vartanian 21

S. K. Amasa 25

7. Further Analysis of the Relations Between the Amplitude of Action Potential in the Heart Muscle Fibre, Intramyocardial Conduction Velocity and the Amplitude of the ECG.  
J. Fletcher & G. A. Vartanian 29

SPECIAL ARTICLES:

1. Biomedical Models of Human Neoplasia.  
B. K. G. Assoku 32

2. A Review of Cardiovascular Disease as seen in the Cardiac Clinic of the Korle Be Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana.  
J. O. M. Pobee, Yaw Anim Addo, E.B. Larbi and J. Adu 41

3. The 1973 Hong Kong Influenza in Ghana—I  
W. W. Nowacki and P. A. K. Addy 50

4. Pride and Prejudice in Science  
Lord S. Zuckerman 52

CASE REPORTS:

1. Acute Choroido-retinal Infarction Following Ophthalmic Artery Occlusion.  
C. O. Quarcoopome 61

2. Idiopathic Intussusception in Adult Ghanaians,  
A. A. D. Ampoma 64

CURRENT PRACTICE:

1. Typhoid Perforation of The Ileum in a Rural Hospital.  
E. J. Stirniman 67

2. Management of Typhoid Perforation  
E. A. Badoe 70

K. A. Oduro 73

4. Surveillance of Smallpox.  
G. A. Ashitey 76

ASSOCIATION NEWS:

1. The Physician and Population Change a Strategy for Action; Proceedings of Conference 77

2. The XIII International Congress of Internal Medicine 81

3. Eye Research Institute of Retina Foundation Congress 87


5. Congratulations—Prof. A.K. Foli 82

Vol. 14 Number 2 June 1975
EDITORIAL:
1. Recent Salary Review 83
2. Aviation and the Sickle Cell State 84

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
3. Pentagastrin as a Stimulant of Gastric acid Secretion in Ghanaians. J. L. Wosornu 97

CASE REPORTS:
2. Surgical Endocrinopathy in Accra J. L. Wosornu 117

PRELIMINARY COMMUNICATION:
Hyposthenuria in Sickle Cell Trait. S. Kojo Addae and M. B. Ibrahim 121

CURRENT PRACTICE:
Clinical Problems in amoebiasis. E. O. Archarnpong and A. K. Foil 122

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Physiology of Sickle Cell State in Relation to Aviation S. Kojo Addae 128
2. The Sickle Cell Trait and Aviation.:An Assessment of the Evidence Available. F. F. T. Diabanor 133
3. Diagnosis of Sickle Cell Disease: A Definitive Assessment Regarding Medical Journalism With Respect to Aviation. F. I .D. Konotey-Ahulu 139
4. Recent Negotiations on Salary Scales and Allowances for Medical Officers and Dental Surgeons in the Civil Service. A. G. Boohene 50

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Epidemiological Notes 154
2. General Information 157
5. Resolutions: 17th Annual General Conference 166
6. New Members of the Executive Council of the G.M.A.167
7. 15th Annual Conference of the Association of Radiologists of West Africa 167
8. Lehmann—Ringelhann Prize in Clinical Genetics
9. Congratulations for Elevation to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians.
   i) Dr. F.I.D. Konotey-Ahulu
   ii) Dr. K. Bandoh
   iii) Dr. S. Ofosu-Amoah 168

Vol 14 Number 3 September 1975

EDITORIAL:
1. Health Planning 169
2. Fertility in Women 170

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
3. Polycystic Ovaries B. Adelusi, V. E. Aimakhu and E. A. Wright 181
4. Systemic Copper and Sex Steroids Uptake by Rat Tissues O. A. Ladeinde, B. Kwaku Adadevoh and S. A. Adadevoh 185
5. Sensitivity Test on Neisseria Meningitidis Strains to Antibiotic Drugs Voros, Salles, Marbel, Grant, Nimo, Belcher, Chew and Adibo 188
6. Investigation of Helminth Parasites in Well-cared-for Dogs in Accra R. K. Anteson and D. Corkish 193
7. Trends in Fertility of Women Ampofo, Wilson and Bernard 196
8. Experience with Morgan Perfusion Contact Lens in Treating Eye Infections & Burns M. C. Oppong 201

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Interface Between Statistics and Health Planning K. Saakwa-Mante 206
3. Reflections on the Health Budget S. Ofosu-Amaah 215
4. Alcoholism — The African Scene C. C. Adomako 223
5. Some Problems of Research Design in the Human Experimental Subject S. K. Addae 229

CURRENT PRACTICE:
2. Evaluation of Vaginal Tubal Ligation Y. Brobbey 238
CASE REPORTS:
1. Hyperosmolar Non-ketotic Diabetic Coma in a Juvenile
   S. K. Owusu, F. S. Anterkyi and K. E. Shaw-Taylor 241
2. Budd-Chiari Syndrome Complicating Polycythaemia Vera
   Folabi Olumide 243
3. Successful Caesarian Section after Death from Acute Bacterial Meningitis
   G. L. N. Chew, A. M. G. Wilson and Florence Kyere 245
4. Occurrence of Volvulus With Intestinal obstruction after ventriculo-peritoneal CSF diversion
   Adelola Adeloye, E. O. Kalefalye and A• A. Olumide 246

BOOK REVIEW:
Planning Medical Care Kurt Schwarz 249

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Annual General Conference 250
2. A Brief on the Society of Ghana Women Medical and Dental Practitioners 250
3. Announcement of an AEA Symposium 252
4. Congratulations on Elevation to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
   Dr K. K. Korsah & Dr K. Kwako 252

Vol. 14 Number 4 December 1975

EDITORIAL:
1. The National Drink 253
2. Haematuria

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. The Distribution of Abnormal Haemoglobins in the Akan Group in the Ivory Coast.
   R. Cabannes A. Accurso, C. Nicolas D. Arne 257
2. Semen analysis in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. A. A. Bruce-Tagoe, E. K. Newman A. A. Kisseih
3. Hypersideraemia in Viral Hepatitis. T. D. Osafo & E. Asibey 266
4. Outbreak of Vibrio Parahaemolyticus in Ghana.
   Lucia Amenuvor, S. Voros, E. C. Marbel & C. A. Salles 273
5. Pyogenic Meningitis in Childhood in a four year period. T. Odugbemi &O. Ogunbi 277
   R. J. A. Fenuku & A. K. Foli 289
8. Studies in the Premature Babies Unit at Korle Flu Teaching Hospital. C. A. Reindorf 292
10. The Causes and Management of haematuria in Accra.
    E. D. Yeboah J. K. M. Quartey, S. A. Arthur 299
11. Hypotensive effect of the 4-Aminoquinoline Anti-malarial Drugs. Ayoola Olatunde 306
12. Tracer Studies with Human Dental Enamel. G. K. Tetteh 315


PRELIMINARY REPORT:
Suicides in a General Hospital C. C. A Adomako 323

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
Management Problems of an affiliated Teaching Hospital. S. R. A. Dodu 326


CASE REPORTS:
1. Pulmonary Changes following Turpentine Poisoning. S. H. Annobil 343
2. Congenital Eversion of Right Upper Eyelid. Adenike Abiose 345

CURRENT PRACTICE:

Management of the Sickle cell patient Including Emergency treatment of Sickle Cell Crisis.
F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu 347

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Breast Feeding R. C. Braun 365

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Director of Medical Research & Secretary Medical Research Council of Nigeria. 366
EDITORIAL:
Ocular Lesions of Onchocerciasis  1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. The Aetiology of Infantile Enteritis in Accra.
2. Tissue Inhibition of Human Erythropoietin. K. R. Abaidoo 10
3. Evaluation of Gastric Lesions by Estimating Sulphhydryl Groups in Gastric Juice.
   T. F. Solanke & S. O. Osanyintayi 15
4. Radioimmunoassay of Follicle Stimulating Hormone in Human Plasma.
   E. O. Akande 18
5. Kwabenya Shadow Shield Whole Body Counter for Clinical Diagnosis and Medical Research.
   B. W. Garbrah 24
6. A Pattern of Hyperglycaemic Coma and Pre-coma in Nigerian Diabetic Patients.
   A. Adetuyibi 33
7. Australian Antigen in Blood Donors in Zaria, Nigeria. B. B. Trebedi 38
8 Onchocerciasis: A Comparative study of Ocular Lesions in Endemic and non-endemic areas in Ghana
   C. O Quarcooepome 40
9. Experiences with the Anaesthetic Management of the Nigerian Diabetic Undergoing Surgery
   Dorothy N. O Fjoulkes-Crabbe 49

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The 1973 Hong Kong Influenza Epidemic in Ghana, Part If.
3. Pica Among Ghanaian Pregnant Women. Rex O Asante 61

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
1. Pulmonary Manifestation of Progressive Sypctic Sclerosis. B. O. Onadeko & E. a Solowora 69
   E. Q. Archampong & E.D. Yeboah 74

CASE REPORT:
Hepatobiliary Excretion of Urographic Sodium Diatriozoate. T.M. Kolawole & M.L Ojemuyiwa 77

CORRESPONDENCE:
1. Experience with a Technique of Highly Selective vagotomy
(Proximal vagotomy) in Korle Bu Hospital. H. K. Takyi 80
2. Histological Identification of Hepatitis—B Antigen (HBAg) in Paraffin Sections of live Biopsies. G. M. Edingtort 81

REVIEW:
Colour Atlas of Eye Diseases in the Negro KO. Bentsi-Enchill 83

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Congratulations—Prof. E.A. Badoe 83

Volume 15 Number 2 June 1976

EDITORIAL

Enteroviruses from our Water and Sewerage 84

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
1. Anthropometric Assessment of Nutritional Status of Young Children. Hutton Addy 128

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. The role of health examination Surveys in planning rural medical services. Planning and Conducting Surveys
2. Diabetes in Ghana—A 10 year study S. K. Owusu 93
3. The Influence of the age of onset on the Pattern of Diabetic Illness in the Nigerian African. A. Adetuyibi 97
   P. A. K. Addy, S. Otatume 102
   S. Voros, C.A. Salles, É.C. Marbell, A. Asamoah-Adu, S. N. Aloakwa, G. Kelemen 109
   F. I. Akinsete, A. E. Boyo 114
7. Use of Entonox for Minor surgical Procedures.
   A. O. Oyegunle and F. Fasehum 114
8. Reference Values for Serum Total Calcium and Magnesium Determined by Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry T. D. Osafo 123

CASE REPORT:
Multiple Eyes. A case Report C. O. Quarcoopome 133

CURRENT PRACTICE:
The Management of Systemic Hypertension J. O. M. Pobee 136

ABSTRACT:
Enzyme Cytochemistry of Acute Leukaemia  Dr. Kwadwo James R. Abaidoo 142

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Unilateral Congenital Eversion of the Upper Eyelid  K. O. Bentsi-Enchill 143

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. After Dinner Speech  144
2. Views of the new Director of Medical Services.  146
3 List of Newly Graduated Doctors  150
4 Congratulations on elevation to Fellowship, Prof. P. A, Ampofo  151

Volume 15 Number 4 December 1976

EDITORIAL:

Pigmented Lesions and Malignant Melanoma  251

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Haemoglobin phenotype patterns in more than 1,000 Consecutive Newborn Babies in Ghana
   K. A. Gbedemah, C. T. A. Acquaye, F. f. D. Konotey-Ahulu  254
2. An Open evaluation of a new Antidiabetic agent — Glibinese in maturity-onset diabetes
   S. K. Owusu, K, Ocran T. D, Osafo  258
4. Whole Blood plasma and erythrocyte Cholinesterase in agricultural workers exposed to organo-
   phosphate insecticides  265
5. Volvulus of the Sigmoid Colon A.A. D. Ampoma, Lade Wosornu 270
6. Some Epidemiological Aspects of Gastroenteritis in Hospitalised Children
   Dr. S. Voros, Dr.J. A. Q. Sackey, Dr. C. A. Salles, Dr. C. E. Marbell, Miss M. Agyei, Miss M. Reimmer  274
7. Application of simplified approach to the diagnosis of Coagulation defects E.M. Essien  281
8. Strangulated hernia in Lagos: experience of 368 cases T. A. J. Ogunbly1 and B. A. Akande  286
9. Pigmentation of the feet and Malignant Melanoma
   J.O. Oluwasaruni, S.O. Bayern!, F.S. Oluwole A 0 Williams  290
10 Sero-epidemiological Survey of Hepatitis B-virus Infection in School
    Children around Senchi Area (Preliminary Report)

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
1. Causes and Frequency of Excision of the Eye in Ghana K. O. Bentsi-Enchill  300
CASE REPORTS:
1. Severe hyponatraemia associated with localised hyperhidrosis  
   R. L. A. Fenuku and D. A. Tete-Donkor 304
2. Pneumatoses intestinalis of the small bowel S. A. Adebonojo 306

CURRENT PRACTICE:
The Management of Diabetes Mellitus S K Owusu 309

BOOK REVIEW:
Nutrition in Preventive Medicine  
F. K. Wururapa 317

Volume 16 Number 1 March 1977

EDITORIAL:
1. Ghana-Japan Medical Co-operation  
2. Water Development Projects & Health.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Application of Scanning Electron Microscope in observation of Red Blood Cells in  
   Haemoglobinopathies J. A. Mingle, S. Furukawa, S. Sekimoto 4
2. Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency in Sickle Cell Disease Patients in Accra  
   C. T. A. Acquaye, K. A. Gbedemah, F. I. D Konotey-Ahulu 15
3. Biologically-Active Prostglandin-Like Extracts from Burkitt Lymphoma and Embryonal Sarcoma  
   Tissue O. O. Ajayi and D. T. Okpako 19
5. Germfree Animals as tools for Medical Research Tomezo Huziwara 27
6. Serum Alkaline Phosphatase Activity of Adolescent mothers during prolonged lactation:  
   R. J. A. Fenuku and A. K. Foil 32

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Lymphoreticular Disorders in Lagos J. T. Kofi Duncan, 35
2. Annual Grand Medical Ward Round J. O. M. Pobee 44

CURRENT PRACTICE:
Fluid and Electrolyte Therapy E. A. Badoe 50

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Tuberculosis of the Duodenum Presenting as Gastic outlet Obstruction  
B. Akande and T. A. J. Ogunbiyi 57
ABSTRACT:
Urine pH Values in Adult Ghanaians in Accra R. I. A. Fenuku 60

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Poliovirus Serotypes 1 & 2: The Major Cause of Infantile Paralysis during 1972 through 1974 in Ghana 61

Vol. 16 Number 2 June 1977

EDITORIAL:
1. Breast Cancer 63
2. Chloroquine, Malaria and Blindness

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Glomerular Filtration Rate (G.F.R.) in Normal Ghanaian Subjects
2. Functional Heterogeneity of Human Nephron Population
   in the Sickle Cell Patient. S. Kojo Addae 71
3. Uric Acid Excretion in Adult Nigerian Subjects Onyinade Elebute 77
4. Carbenicillin Indanyl Sodium (Geopen Oral) in Urinary Tract Infection Y. Anim-Addo 81
5. Gastric Acid Hypersecretion Folabi Olumide & A. O. Adesola 83
6. Manometric Study of the lower Oesophageal Sphincter in Duodenal Ulcer Patients
   O. O. Bassey 86
7. Anaesthetic 'Management in Children with Laryngeal Papillomatosis D.J. O. Foulkes-Crabbe 93
8. The Surgical Treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in Nigeria S. A. Adebonojo and I. A. Grillo 96

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
2. Chronic Mental Health. As seen in Ghana E. B. Forster, S. A. Danquah 109

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
On the proper use of the laboratory Services 132

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Advances in Internal Medicine — International Conference, January 8—12, 1978

Vol. 16 Number 3 September 1977
EDITORIAL:
Surgeons for West Africa 135

FIRST SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Head and Neck Cancer 138

SECOND SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Cancer of the Oesophagus Gastrointestinal Tract 151

THIRD SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Genitourinary Tumours 166

FOURTH SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Breast and Skin Tumours 189

FIFTH SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Lymphoma and General Topics 194

SIXTH SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Guest Lecture 206

SEVENTH SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Anaesthesia 212

EIGHTH SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Symposium on Breast Cancer 222

NINTH SCIENTIFIC SESSION:
Bone and Female Genital Tumours 228

ASSOCIATION NEWS: 244

SEPTRIN SYMPOSIUM

Editorial and acknowledgements Page 3
Chairman's opening address Professor Y. Asirifi Page 5
Some pre-clinical and clinical aspects of Septrin L. S. Bernstein 6
An intermittent continuum — chronic urinary tract infection  G. Hooper  13
Anti-bacterial treatment of gastro-intestinal infections  E. S. Chalhoob & J. B. King  19
Septrin in paediatric practice in Ghana  A. Boohene  22
A complicated case of typhoid fever in Ghana  S. K. Owusu  24
Septrin compared with chloroquine in the treatment of falciparum malaria  E. G. Beausoleil  25
Open discussion  27
Closing address  Professor Y. Asirifi  30

Vol. 17 Number 1 March 1978

EDITORIAL
Schistosomiasis: Its Epidemiological Surveillance and Control  . Page 1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Haptoglobin Types in Ghana
Kofi Opong-Mensah, George Kessie, C. T. A. Acquaye & J. H. Oldham  .......3
2. Outbreak of Schistosomiasis: An Ecological and Epidemiological Study in a Rural
Community.  M. A. Odei  ...... 7
3. Admissions and Deaths of Ne-o-nates in the Paediatric Department - Komfo Anokye Hospital,
1974/75  A. P. Asafo-Adjei  ...... 14
4. Mechanical Vacuum Aspiration for Evacuating the Uterine Cavity in a Rural Hospital in
Nigeria.  M. O. Sogbanmu  ...... 20
5. Glaucomas in Lagos.  Sola Maiekodunmi  ....... 23
R. J. D. Fenuku  ...... 27
7. Alpha-fetoprotein in Normal People, Patients with Liver Diseases and those with Cancers - A Study
by Radio-immunoassay in Accra – Ghana.
8. Iron Absorption and Turnover in Apparently Healthy Ghanaians: Studies with Shadow-Sheild,
Whole-body Counter
A. A. Bruce-Tagoe, B. W. Garbrarah, A. W. K. Kyere and J. H. Amuasi  ....... 35
9. Surgical Experience with Congenital Heart Disease at the University College Hospital, Ibadan.
S. A. Adebonojo, Femi Jaiye-simi, A. O. Adebo and O. Osinowo  ........ 43

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Blood Gas Tensions in Severe Tetanus  O. O. Elegbeleye  52
2. Jaundice and yellow Fever in Ghana. A Sero-epidemiological Study of 1396 Jaundiced Patients
Patrick A: K: Addy, Theresa M. Ahiabor and Michael A. Pappoe  ........ 54

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
The Tragedy of Bone Tumours.
M. O. A. Jaja, J. T. Kofi Duncan and O. A. Olaloye  ....... 60

CASE REPORT:
ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. Annual Conference of the Ghana Medical Association ......65
2. Ghana/German Medical Conference ......65
3. The Committee on Training of Postgraduates ......65

Vol. 17 Number 2 June 1978

EDITORIAL
1. Personal Audit in Medical Practice ..67
2. Malaria: The Perennial Problem .. 69

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
   A. Asamoah-Adu & E. C. Marbell ......71
2. Pattern of Skull Fractures in Ibadan. A. A. Olumide & A. Adeloye ......79
3. A Survey of Admissions and Deaths in the Paediatric Department - Komfo Anokye Hospital - Kumasi, 1974/75 A. P. Asafo-Agyei ..........84
4. Upper Gastrointestinal Fibre-Endoscopy in Ibadan – An Analysis of 205 Consecutive Procedures Toriola F. Solanke .. 95
   S. Voros, A. Asamoah-Adu, E. C. Marbell & C. Bentsi. .. 98
6. Deaths Associated with Anaesthesia, Analgesia and Surgery
   A. Esi E. Mensah & E. A. Badoe .....105
7. Differences in the Osmolality and Electrolyte Concentrations of Plasma and Serum
   R.I. A. Fenuku .............112
   E. Q. Archampong & J. B. Quartey- Papafio ......115

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Anatomy of Facial Fractures Simplified. J. B. David .. 120
2. Nasopharyngeal Cancer Kwantung Tumour. O. Kwamina Amoah ...125
4. Some Problems Associated with Demand and Supply of Blood in a Regional Hospital
   J. K. Acquaye ......138

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Visual Recovery in Temporal Arteritis. Eramus O. Oji & David McLeod ....143
EDITORIAL
The Future of the Ghana Medical Journal - A crisis of Financial and Academic Support ...

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Studies on Toxoplasmosis in Ghana. I. Prevalence of Toxoplasma Antibodies as measured by the Haemogglutination (Eiken) Test
   Reginald K. Anteson, Shoji Sekimoto. Senji Furukawa. Takao Yoshida and M. A. Nyonator
2. Bell's Palsy and Diabetes in Ghana S. K. Owusu ...
3. Neonatal Hyperbilirubinaemia Identifying infants at Risks by Means of Cord Bilirubin Determination. Antoine K. Fomufod ...
   F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu, John Biles, A. Opare-Mante. and George Yawson .......

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
Hospital Based Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Programme. The Results of Four Years Experience at Akosombo Hospital, Ghana.
   G. A. Ashitey and L. K. A. Derban .....159
2. Reflections on the Evolution of Anaesthesia in Korle Bu Hospital, Accra.
   A. Esi E. Mensah .....164
4. Apparent Refractility of Aedes (Stegomyia) Aegypti (L) (Diptera culicidae) to Experimental Dugbe (Strain Amp 5689) Virus Infection. P. A. K. Addy .....177

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Is There Haemoglobin-Phenotype Selectivity for Proneness to Intestinal Infections?
   F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu. .....179

CASE REPORTS:
1. Scleroma In The Upper Region of Ghana. James P. Murphy, Robert Odoi, and Gene Posnock .....181
2. Primary Lymphosarcoma of the Breast. J. B. Quartey-Papafio .....183

CORRESPONDENCE:
Outbreak of urinary and intestinal Schistosomiasis in the Weija (Densu) Reservoir ...

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. The Second Annual Ghana Medical Association Friedrich Thieding Foundation Conference .....185
2. 19th Annual Conference West African College of Surgeons Yaounde (Jan. 25-31st 1979)  ...185

Vol. 17 numbers 4 November 1978

EDITORIAL Page
1. The Central Referral Hospital: Is Its Place in the Health Service - its threatened? ...
2. The "Clinical" - A word to the young. .....189

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
2. Studies on Toxoplasmosis in Ghana I Prevalence of Toxoplasma Antibodies.  
   R. K. Anteson, Shoji Seki-moto, Senji Furukawa Takao Yoshida and M. A. Nyonator .......200

   R. K. Anteson Shoji ekimoto Senji Furukawa I. A. Quakyi ......203

4. Impacted Partial Dentures in the Oesophagus.  
   Seth Bekoe, J. B. David and O. K. Amoah ........207

5. Serum Copper and Iron in Pregnancy and Prolonged Lactation in Accra.  R. I. A. Fenuku ............212

   E. O. Oji, Redmond Smith .........216

7. Carcinoma of the Upper Gastro-intestinal Tract  
   M. A. Atoba, E. A. Lewis, E. A. Aderoju, E. A. Ayoola .......221

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Diabetes Mellitus Complicating Pregnancy.  Eric A. Laryea ......224
2. Importance of Zoonoses in Medical Practice.  P. A. K. Addy ......229

3. Clinical Manifestations of Glucose 6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6-PD) Deficiency in Ghana  
   S. K. Owusu ......235
4. The Influence of Social class on Public and Preventive Health Programmes  
   Olanipekun K. Alausa ... 240

CASE REPORT:  
Encephalocele of the Anterior Fontanelle.  Adelola Adeloye .....243

CORRESPONDENCE:  "Active Hypothyroidism?"  S. K. Owusu ........245

ASSOCIATION NEWS:  
1. Smith & Nephew Fellowship in 1979/80 ......246
2. The Health Education Council ...............................246
3. Postgraduate course in Gastroenterology ......246

Vol. 18 number 1 March 1979

EDITORIAL  
Danfa Rural Health Project ........1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
   Olanipekun K. Alausa ......3
2. Studies on Toxoplasmosis in Ghana. III Some observations on the epidemiology of the disease.  
   Reginald K. Anteson; Takao Yoshida and M. A. Nyonator ............11
3. Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) Deficiency and Nephrotic Syndrome
A. O. Oluboyede and G. J. F. Esan ..........15
4. The Effect of Chloroquine on the binding of Oestradiol - 17β in the Uterine cytosol of Rabbit.
E. E. Anato-Dumelo ...18
5. Control of Intestinal Helminths in the Danfa Project Area.
    L. Osei ; F. K. Wurapa; D. W. Belcher; M. E. Pappoe and W. B. Ward ..........23
6. Oesophageal foreign bodies in Children  Edwin Jallah ........................................27
    J. T. Anim ..........30

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
Measles vaccination of sick children. Three years experience in Central Accra.
    Sheila Amoah ..........34
The Evolution of Primary Health Care Programme: The Danfa Experience 1970-1977
    Peter Lamptey; Fred Wurapa and David Nicholas .................................. 37

MEDICAL MEMORANDA:
Loss of vision during therapy with Vincristine. K. O. Bentsi-Enchi .................42

CORRESPONDENCE:
1. Pathology Request Forms.  J. T. Anim  .........................43
    R. K. Anteson  .........................44

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. "Work-To-Rule"  ..........45
2. Obituary  ............45

Congratulations Prof. Dodu and Professor Badoe  ..........45

Vol. 18 numbers 2 June 1979

EDITORIAL
1. A New Health Order?  ........................................46
2. Tetanus  ........................................................47

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
1. Gonadal Tumours in Children - A Review of Cases in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital,
    Accra.  J. F. K. Tandoh  ............... 48
2. Etimodate: Its use in Electroconvulsive Therapy
    C. E. Famewo and A. O. Odejide  ..............51
3. Physical Growth and Development of Ghanaian School Children (III) Assessment of Male and
    Female Stages of Maturity and Subcutaneous fat Growth Patterns.
    E. K. M. Agbenu  ..........................54
4. The Conversion Factor For Oral Temperature When Axillary Temperature has been taken by
    either the Celsius Thermometer or Fahrenheit Thermometer.
    J. B. Fordjour and A. Lawson.  ..................62
5. High Dose Cyclophosphamide in Drug Resistant and Relapsing Burkitt's Lymphoma
    F. K. Nkrumah and R. J. Biggar  ..................64
6. The Management of Severe Tetanus in a Special Care Unit.
D. R. Lisk and R. E. O. Coker ...................68
7. Sensitivity of Urinary Pathogen from Hospitalised Patients in Ibadan to Oxolinic Acid and other Chemotherapeutic Agents.
K. O. Alausa and D. Montefiore .......73

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Indications and Rational for Surgery in the Neonates and Infants With Congenital Heart Disease  S. A. Abebanojo  ..... 76
2. Community, Involvement in Health Care: The Kintampo Experience in Ghana A Study in the Changing Health Model  Patrick Adubofour Twumasi  ...... 80
3. A New Health Order: The Ghana Medical Association's Submission to the Okoh Commission  G. A. Ashitey  ..................85
4. Some Personel Encounters with a Remarkable Physician.
F. I. D. Konotey-Ahulu ............... 88

CASE REPORT:
Inhale Tracheostomy Tube. Lt.-Col. Kwasi Adjepong .......91

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. West African College of Surgeons 20th Annual Conference, Enugu, Nigeria  .... 94
2. Obituary --- A. J. Hawe ..........94

Vol. 18 numbers 3 September 1979

EDITORIAL
WITH PROCEEDINGS OF THE GASTROENTEROLOGY WORKSHOP WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS ACCRA) APRIL 1979
Growing Points in Post Graduate Surgical Education in West Africa ......95
W.A.C.S. - ARTICLES:
1. Aetiology of Duodenal and Gastric Ulcers.  K. N. Nkrumah .......96
2. Surgical Problems in Peptic Ulcer.  E. Q. Archampong  ..... 100
3. Gastric Cancer.  E. A. Badoe  ..... 104
4. The Diagnosis of Primary Liver Cell Carcinoma.  J. B., Quartey-Papafi  .. 107
5. The Treatment of Primary Liver Cell Cancer.  E. Q. Archampong  ...  109
6. The Surgical Complications in Amoebiasis.  E. Q. Archampong  ...... 115
7. Acute Pancreatitis.  E. Q. Archampong  ...  122
8. Malignant Tumours of the Colon and Rectum.  E. A. Badoe  .... .. 134

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
S. Hagan Annobil & E. A. Yeboah  ... 141
2. Direct Vision Internal Urethrotomy for the Treatment of Urethral Strictures.
E. D. Yeboah & J. K. M. Quartey  ... 144
3. Chronic Urethral Discharge and Male Infertility.  E. D. Yeboah  ... 148
4. Variation in Intensity of Breeding of Malaria Vector Anopheles Gambiae .  W. A. Chinery  ... 153
5. Effect of Cholera Vaccination on Brucellosis Immunology in West Africa.
O. K. Alausa .............159
SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Duplications of the Alimentary Tract  J. F. K. Tandoh ... 169
2. Serum Alkaline Phosphate Activity in Health and Hepatobiliary Disease in Accra.
R. I. A. Fenuku & A. K. Foli ... 176
3. Chloroquin Ototoxicity - An Iatrogenic Tragedy.          M. N. Obiako ... 179
4. Open Injuries of the Anterior Aspect of the Neck.         A. A. Ladapo ... 182
5. The Use of Mousseau-Barbin Tube for Palliation in Inoperable Cancer of the Oesophagus. O. Osinowu, O. Adebo, S. A. Adebo-nojo & I. A. Grillo ... 186
O. K. Alausa ... 192

CASE REPORTS:
1. Juvenile Hirschsprung’s Disease - A Case Report.  S. O. A. Duvie, & A. O. Laja ... 198
2. Tumour at the Site of Cholera Vaccination.  A. G. Laing & E. Q. Archampong ... 203

BOOK REVIEW:
Child-to-Child. Andrey Aarons & H. Hawes .......206

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
1. 4th International Symposium on Prevention and Detection of Cancer-London
   26-31, July 1980 ... 207
2. West African College of Surgeons, January 28th-February 1, 1980 .....207
3. West African College of Physicians. ..... 208
4. OBITUARY - J. B. David ...... 208

Vol. 18 numbers 4 December 1979

EDITORIALS
1. Haemodialysis for Renal Failure ... 210
2. Traditional Healers and Herbal Medicine .....210

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Vascular Access for Haemodialysis for Acute and Chronic Renal failure at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra.  E. D. Yeboah et al ... 212
3. The Outcome of Peritonitis in an Urban Medical Centre.  E. Q. Archampong ... 226
5. The Fine Structure of the Myocardium of The Grey Seal.  Ayettey A. S. .....234
7. The Effect of Hypophysectomy on the Selective of Intestinal Disaccharidase in Response to Dietary Substrate.  Johnson A. O. K. .......244
Kawanishi M. and Archampong E. Q. ... 248

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. The Potentialities of Traditional Healers and Herbal Drugs in Health Care Delivery in Africa 
Adjepon-Yamoah, K. K. ... 257
3. An Open Evaluation of Mono-Component Insul in Ghana. Owusu, S. K. ...264
4. Cryptococcal Infection of the Lung. Bekoe S et al ... 266

CASE REPORTS:
1. A Phenotypically Normal Patient with 47 XYY Syndrome. 
Engmann F. L. .....273
2. A Case of Phaeochromocytoma Successfully Treated Surgically. 
Adjepon-Yamoah K. K. .....276
Osege D. N. and Amaku E. O. .....280
4. Limb and Craniofacial Defects Associated with Aberrant Tissue Bands. 
Oluwasanmi, J. O. et al 282

CORRESPONDENCE:
Serum conjugated Bilirubin in Hepatocellular Disease in Accra. - R. I. A. Feneku ...285

Vol. 19 number 1 September 1980

EDITORIAL Page
1. Primary Health Care for Ghana ..... 1
2. Medicinal Plants in Our Health Care Delivery System ..... 2

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Physical Growth and Development of Ghanaian School Children (IV) 
E. K. M. Agbenu .....3
Janet Neequaye, K. Twum-Danso, Prof. F:K. Nkrumah .....16
3. Acetylation Polymorphism in Ghanaians. 
N. -M. Woolhouse & Lynda C. Atu-Taylor .....20
4. The Incidence of Chronic Simple Glancoma "and Angle Closure Glancoma in the Niger River Eye 
Clinic, Onitsa, Anambra State Nigeria. 
E. O. Oji and D. O. Burton-Lindua .....24
5. Serum Bilirubin and Alkaline Phosphatase - in Acute Viral Hepatitis in Accra 
R.I. A. Feneku .....27
6. Patterns of Response to Slow Injection of Salbutamol in Asthmatics 
C. C. Enu., K. J. Willams, O.O. Elegbeleye & D. Femi-Pearse .....30
Psychiatric Aspects of Epilepsy Brain Damage in Ghanaian Children. F. Y. Atta-Johnson. .....33

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Issues of Health Care Delivery A Primary Health Care Strategy for Ghana. K. 'P., Nimo ...40
2. The value of Metabolic Studies in Scientific Research into Medicinal Plants.  
Marian Addy  ....45

3. A New Health Order. Eustace Akwei  .....49

J. O. O. Commeey  ....55

5. Mantoux Text as a Diagnostic Tool - in the Investigation of Infertile Patients.  
M. O. Sogbanmu, J. A. Ibitara, S. E. O. Ohene-Adu  .....58

6. Serum Osmotarity of Pregnant Ghanaian Women.  R. I. A. Fenuku  ....60

CASE REPORTS:

1. Diffuse Cavernous Haemangioma in Wandering Spleen.  
O. O. Mbonu.G, C. Ejekam, A. C. Ude  ... 61

2. Pneumonia, Pneumothorax and Subcutaneous Emphysema Complicating Kerosene Poisoning  
S. H. Annobil  ......63

Vol. 19 number 2  June 1990

EDITORIAL
Gastro-Intestinal Endoscopy, Its Relevance to the Diagnosis of Gastro-Intestinal Diseases in Ghana  ...66

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:

1. Cerebral Malaria in Accra.  J. O. O., Dr. Mills-Tetteh and B. J. Phillips  ... 68

2. Cortisol Levels in Pyogenic (Pneumococcal) meningitis.  S. K. Owusu & K. Agyepon- Yamoah  ....72

3. Serum Ascorbic Acid Levels in children with Protein-Calorie malnutrition.  
A. A. O. Laditan & M. Fafunso  .75


5. Validity of Random Standard Brom-sulphthalein Dye Test.  E. A. Ayooia & M. A. Atoba  ....81

T. K. Acquaye  .....84


F. Olumide, B. Akande, O. Odugbemi, A. O. Adesola  .....98

10. Indications, Rationale and Problems with Permanent Cardiac Pacing in Developing countries.  
S. A. Adebonojo, O. Osinowo, O. A., A.I. Grillo  .....104

The incidence of chronic simple glaucoma and angle closure glaucoma in the Niger River Clinic, Onitsha. E.O. Oji & B. Lindau .....114

SPECIAL ARTICLES:
1. Towards Improving Professional Standards – I. F. Daniels ... 117
2. Towards Improving Professional Standards – II. G. A. Ashitey ...119

CASE REPORTS:
1. Tuberculosis of the Larynx. Mimicking Carcinoma of the Larynx. A. O. Ihekw & G. C. Ejekam ...121
2. Renovascular hypertension in Nigerian Female. ...124
3. Organophosphorus Poisoning Preparations used against Head Lice. R. Lewis ....127

CORRIGENDUM .. 129

Vol. 19 number 3 September 1990

EDITORIAL
Modern Treatment of Gonorrhoea and Non-Gonococcal Urethritis ....131
Contraceptives For Family Planning Today... 132

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Five years of Cardiac Register with Particular Reference to Cardiomyopathies. Kpodonu, J., Pobee, J. O. M., Larbi, E. B., Chukwemeka, A., Chuwa, M., Johnson, A. ...134

Autoimmunity in Juvenile Diabetes Mellitus in Nigerians. Oli, J. M., Botazzo, G., F., & Doniach, D. ......140

Extrapulmonary Tuberculosis in Enugu A Clinicopathologic Study with Special Emphasis on Treatment Regimen. Ogbuokiri, J. E. & Ejekam, G. C. .....143

Toxoplasmosis in Ghana IV further Evidence of Congenital Disease caused by Toxoplasma Gondii Infections. Anteson, R. K., Techiwara, M., & Nyonator, M. .....146


Acute Retention of Urine at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra. Yeboah, E. D. ... 152

Observations on Pressure Effects of Simple Goitre. Ojoge, R. 0., Evbuomwan, I. .......156

Cancer of the Breast in Accra. J. B. Quartey-Papafio, & J. T. Anim .....159


A Clinical Study of Anxiety Symptoms in Outpatients attending the Accra Psychiatric Hospital, Lamptey, J. J. ... 166

Serum Calcium and Magnesium of Pregnant Ghanaian Woman. Fenuku, R. T. A. ... 170

CASE REPORTS:
1. Chromosome Studies in Girls with Primary Amenorrhoea. Engmann, F. R. L....172
2. Coarctation of the Aorta in Lagos.
   Enu, C. C. Bandele, E. O. Elegbeleye, O. O. ....175
3. Hyperparathyroidism Associated with Paget's Disease of the Bones.
   Oli, J. M. & Umerch, B. C. ... 178
5. Coma due to Scorpion Sting. Nkrumah, K. N. & Boakye, A. K. ...182

SPECIAL REPORTS:

1. Antibody to Hepatitis B. Core Antigen (Anti-HBC) e Antigen and its Antibody (Anti-e) in Menstrual and Seminal Fluid in Nigerian.
   Ayoola, E. A .. Ladipo, O. A. & Odelola, H. A. ....185
2. Shock Lung-Old and cell' Concepts in Drug Therapy -. Famewo, C. E. ... 187

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Canadian Public Health Associations’ 72nd Annual Conference ....191
The first African Congress of Dermathology. ......191

Vol 19 number 4 December 1980

EDITORIAL
Yaws in Rural Ghana ....192

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
1. Inhibition of Anaphylaxis by an Extract of the Antiasthmatic plant Desmodium Adscendens
   Marian Addy 193
3. Protein - Malnutrition in the Sunyani Area - Aetiological Factors.
   Jaydish C. Sobti, Hutton A. Addy ......203

5. Clinical Trial of Spectinomycin (Togainycin) in Gonorrhoea Patients in Lagos
6. Neoplastic Paraplegia - A six year Review of Cases in Ahmadu Bello University Hospital, Zaria. E. I. Mbamali ....220
7 The Relationship between Birth weight and weight Velocity. In early Infancy.
   G. A. Oni ... 223
8. Yaws in Rural Ghana. L. Osei ...228
   A. S. Ayettey ....234
    O. Elegbeleye & A. O. Sofolee ...238

SPECIAL ARTICLES
Health Science Libraries in Ghana. Charles Tettey 241
Routine Diagnosis of Gonorrhoea in the Clinics and Hospitals of Northern States of Nigeria.
   C. S. S. Bello ...247

Advanced Abdominal Pregnancy in Zaria. B. U. Ezem & A. Kumi C. O. ...251

Agege Syndrome. K. N. Nkrumah ... 254

CASE REPORTS
Labour-induced intra-uterine Depressed Skull Fracture in the New-Born (Report of two cases)
N. A. Ojikutu & S. OiArigbabu ....... 257

A Case of Unruptured interstitial Pregnancy Following Ipsilateral Salpingo-oophorectomy
A. H. Collison & G. McCune .....260

3. Reversible Malignant Hypertension in A Nigerian Woman on Oral Contraceptives
A. O. Iggun, T. O. Cole, A. O. Falase ....263


ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Tribute to Prof. K. K. Bentsi-Enchill ....

Vol 20 number 1 March 1981

EDITORIAL
Cytogenetics in the Third World .....1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
   Nkrumah, F.K. .......2

2. Pyogenic Meningitis in the Tamale Regional Hospital. J. K. Acquaye .....9

3. Hepatitis B (e) Antigen and its Antibody in Chronic Liver Disease Experience in Nigeria. E. A. Ayoola .....13

4. Relative Frequency of Down's Syndrome in Korle Bu Hospital, Accra.
   Nii Lomotey Engmann .....16

5. Pattern of Paediatric burn Injury at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital; a Three-year Review 1974-1976.
   S. A. Ademiluyi and G. O. A. Sowemimo .....19

   R. Ofoegbu ..........23

7. Experiences with Colostomy at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital with special Reference to Complications, a Seven-year 'Review, 1972-1980'
   S. A. Ademiluyi and J. T. da Rocha Afodu .........28

The Influence of Egg-burdens on the Host Response to Schistosoma Mansoni eggs in mice.
L. D. Edungbola .....32

Should Bilateral Exploration be done in Symptomatic Infantile and childhood Unilateral Hernia.
S. O. A. Duote .........38

CASE REPORTS:

1. A Mother of a Mongol (Down's Syndrome) with a Mosaic Turner's Syndrome

3. Thrombotic Stroke in a Young Nigerian Girl with Hypercholesterolaemia and Genotype A.S. M.A. Danesi and T.C. Omitiri .................48


Vol 20 number 2 June 1981

EDITORIAL

Haemorrhagic Disease in the Newborn ....51

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. A Review of Haemorrhagic Disease in the Newborn at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. J. T. B. Quaye ......52


3. Childhood Amputation in Northern Nigeria. E. I. Mbamali ......59


5. Onchocercal Rhythm and Significance in Patients with Inguinal Rupture in the Cameroon Beltus Ivo Bejanga ....65

6. Glucose – 6 Phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) and Viral Hepatitis in Nigeria O. A. Oluboyede & E. A. Ayoola ......69

7. A Dose-Response Relationship for Topical Etomidate in the Reduction of Intraocular pressure in Rabbits Erasmus Oji & Anita Oji ......72

8. Effect of Chloroquine on Rat Uterine Peroxidase Activity. K. A. Asamoah & G. S. Asante ....74

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
1. The Hallucinogenic Plants. S. C. Chhabra & A. K. Wahi ... ....77

CASE REPORTS:
1. Feeding Bottle Dental Caries. J. O. O. Commey ....82

2. Acute Abdomen From Spontaneous Haemoperitoneum Associated with Systemic Hypertension-Abdominal Apoplexy. J.B. Quartey-Papafio, E.M. Mwhinyogli, J.O.M. Pobee ....84

Vol 20 number 3 September 1981
EDITORIAL
A Look at Traditional Medicine . ....85

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
1. Antihypertensive Action of Canthium Subcordatum Extract in Hypertensive Patients and Spontaneous Hypertensive Rats  G. L. Boye, E. Ayittey-Smith & Oku Ampofo ....87

2. The Antimicrobial properties of Enantia Chlorantha 
   Oliv. O. Adewoye, Tolu Odugbemi, E. A. Adegoke, S. O. Bamgbose ....90
3. Nephrotoxic African Traditional Herbal Remedies
   D. Adu, Y. Anim-Addo, E. D. Yeboah, G. Ohene-Ampofo .....91
4. A Survey of Parasitic Infections among out-patients at Kotobabi Polyclinic in Accra. Reginald Anteson, Korebuni Minakomi and Maxwell Appawu .... 95
5. Epidemiology of Neonatal Tetanus in the Greater Accra Area -
   Janet Neequaye, F. K. Nkrumah ......98
6. Some Aspects of Non-Neonatal Childhood Tetanus in Accra, Ghana Review of 504 cases
   A. G. Boohene ..........100

7. A Case for Organised Health Education at Medical Facilities in Ghana
   Matilda Pappoe .......104
8. Anaesthesia and Associated Diseases in Surgical Patients Part II. Anaemia, Positive Sickling and Electrophoresis
   A. E. E. Mensah M.B., and Yaw Adu-Gyamfi .....107
   Erasmus Oji .....110
10. Puerperal Mental IIIness in Enugu, Nigeria. U. H. Ihezne ......112

SPECIAL ARTICLES.
1. Functional Aberrant Intrathoracic Goitres. Regina! Ofoegbu .... 116
2. Radio-Isotope imaging (Scintigraphy) at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital by K. N. Nkrumah ... 118
3. Postmortem Angiographic Study of General Vasculature in the Ghanaian Adult Population-
   Methodology. J. T. Anim & A. D. Kofi ......121
4. Improvised Equipment for Anaesthesia-Merits and Dangers by B.U. Umeh. ......123

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.
   Prof. K. K. Adjepon-Yamoah ......126

Vol 21 number 1 September 1987

EDITORIALS
May it never happen again .......1
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) .......1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
   A. R. Neequaye, G. A. Ankra-Badu, R. K. Affram ......3

2. A report on Human Immuno- deficiency virus (HIV) Infection in Ghana up to December 1986
3. Sexual habits and social factors in local Ghanaian prostitutes which could affect the spread of Human Immuno- deficiency Virus (HIV),
4. Acetylator Phenotype and Sulpha Methazine Kinetics
N. M. Woolhouse and L. C. Atu-Taylor ....15
5. Salt activation of Rat Brain Choline Acetyltransferase.
A. B. A. Prempeh .......20
6. Complement in Systemic Food Allergy. B. A. Onile ...24

SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Primary Health Care: A Challenge to Health Education in Ghana.
Matilda E. Pappoe .......29

CLINICAL RESEARCH, CASE REPORTS:
1. Myasthenia Gravis in Accra. P. K. Nyame ...37
2. Ileosigmoid Knot. W. M. Hodasi .......40
J. J. Manni .......42

MEDICAL NEWS:
PNDCL 102
Criminal Code (Amendment) Law, 1985 .......47
ASSOCIATION NEWS: ....48

Vol 21 number 2 December 1987

EDITORIAL: From Accra to Harlem to Harley Street 49

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Observations on parasites and Bacteria in stools of Children with diarrhoeal Disease. ---
R. K. Anteson, K. Minakami, Patience, P. A. Mensah and M. A. Appawu .......51
Diagnosis of Gonorrhoea in a busy Clinic in Nigeria.
J. O. Ashiru, B. A. Onile & A. O. Osoba .......55
The eye in the African Diabetic. K. O. Bentsi-Enchill & S. K. Owusu .......58

Evaluation of Bacteriological Safety of Modified Mc Carey-Kaufman (M-K) Medium and Corneo-Scleral Buttons stored in such media for Keratoplasty
I. N. Nartey ..... 62
Epidemiological and preventive Aspects of Kerosene poisoning in Ghana.
S. H. Annobil .......65
A controlled therapeutic appraisal of modalities of treatment in Kerosene poisoning,
S. H. Annobil & R. B. Biritwum .......69
Sex and sensitivity of Gamma-Glutamyl Transferase and Alkaline phosphatase in the Diagnosis of Liver disease in Igbo Nigerians.
I. O. Kanayo & Chinwuba Onwuyameze ....73

Mortality from burns and Scalds in Children: A ten-Year Study in the University of Benin Teaching Hospital, Nigeria.
I. Evbuomwan ....77

Serial changes in pulmonary function with age in male and female Ghanaians.
S. K. Arthur & K-K. Atsina ....80


SPECIAL ARTICLE:
Silver Jubilee of the University of Ghana Medical School. E. Q. Archampong .....89

CASE REPORT:
Large bowel obstruction due to impacted faeces: a report of two cases.
D. A. Nzeh & S. R. Wild ....92

MEDICAL NEWS:
Diagnostic Cytopathology Course for Pathologists.
by the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine 95

Vol 22 number 1 March 1988

EDITORIAL:
1. Chloroquine-Resistant falciparum Malaria: Comment ... 1
2. Chloroquine-Resistant falciparum Malaria: An emerging Problem in Ghana ... 2

LEADING ARTICLES:
Falciparum Malaria not sensitive to Chloroquine Emerges in Accra in 1987.

IN VIVO: sensitivity of P. falciparum to Chloroquine in Accra, Ghana.

Chloroquine-induced Pruritus: Familial Aggregation and possible Genetic Basis
D. Ofori-Adjei, S. Adjei and Agnes B. Amoa ......15

ORIGINAL ARTICLES:
Re-evaluation of the plasma Creatinine Determination by the Acidification method.
S. K. Arthur & A. Nyarko ......20

Atracurium Beaylate for Neuromuscular Blockade during anaesthesia: Prospects and Problems in
developing Tropical countries
Umeh, Beatrice U. O. ....27

Relative effects of Antimalarial Drugs on the binding of 17B-Oestradiol to Receptors in Rabbit Uterus.
F. O. Mensah & E. E. Anoto-Dumelo ....32

Clostridium Difficile in the normal Adult faecal Flora
V. O. Rotimi & Duro Akindutire ... 37

CASE REPORT:
Bilateral Iachaemic Papillopathy in a Liberian with eclamptic fits: A Case report.
J. Njoh, E. S. Kai-Lewis & S. Dharmavaratha ...42

COMING EVENT:
International Conference on Ergonomics, occupational safety .and Health, and the Environment ..45

ASSOCIATION NEWS:
Guidelines for private practice and standardization of fees in private practice. ...47

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: ......52

Vol 22 number 2 June 1988

EDITORIAL REVIEW:
Epidemiological aspects of Colorectal cancer and the importance of colonic Ph. .....1

LEADING ARTICLES
Is Colorectal cancer risk increasing in urban Ghanaians? ,
Carcinoma of the pancreas: A review of autopsy material at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital for the period 1972-1981.
K. E. Dankwa & J. T. Anim ......17

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
The role of Pharmacy shops in the management of acute uncomplicated childhood Diarrhoea in Ghana.
Agnes H. Amoa & D. Ofori-Adjei ......21

CASE REPORTS
Non oliguric acute renal failure associated with G-6PD Deficiency complicated by Gastro-testinal bleeding and ischaemic optic neuropathy.
M. O. Mate Kole & R. K. Affram ......25
Idiopathic resorption of Maxillary permanent central incisors or 'Pink Spot'.
C. A. Botchway ...... 28

Fanconi pancytopenia syndrome: report of a case in Ghana.
J. O. 0. Commey .........32
Cardiotoxic effects of milk bush - A common herbal remedy: A report of two cases.
Janet E. Neequaye .......38

ASSOCIATION NEWS ....41
LEADING ARTICLES:
G. A. Ashitey and A. O. C Nettey-Marbell ... 49

Some Demographic Characteristics of two rural communities in Southern Ghana.
E.A. Afari, T. Nakano, S. Owusu-Adjei. ......59

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Serum Lactate Dehydrogenase Activity in sickle cell anaemia
L. R. Roberts, F. K. Adzaku, and P. O. Odonkor ... 63

Peculiarities of middle Ear Infections in Ghana.
G. W. Brobby ......68

Biochemical and pathogenic characteristics of aeromonas hydrophila isolated in Jos, Nigeria.
Agatha Ani, T. Takahashi, M. Sato, H. Saida, D. Agbodaze, R. A. D. Shonekan, S. N. Afoakwa ....74

Acute Appendicitis in rural Ghana: a retrospective study.
Eugene J. Gibney ....80

CASE REPORTS
Ghanaian children of women infected with human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV).
J. E. Neequaye, A. R. Neequaye, J. A. A. Mingle, G. A. Ankra-Badu, A. Asamoah-Adu ... 86

Congenital perineal Hernia.
S. K. Odaibo & A. L. Babeta. ......91

ANNOUNCEMENT
Residency in Diagnostic Cytopathology by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. .....94

CORRESPONDENCE .......96

Vol 22 number 4 December 1988

EDITORIAL REVIEW
Epidemiology of Diabetes Mellitus in West Africa: Incidence and Prevalence Studies. Xxxx missing

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Serum Protein and Lipids in Adolescent sickle cell patients.
P. O. Odonkor and S. Yamamoto ...100
Adolescent Sickle Cell Patients. ? page

Early Childhood Malaria.
*L. Osei and R. K. Anteson* ... 105

Alkaloids of Desmodiurn Adscendens.
*S. Asante-Poku, J. Sakakibara and M. E. Addy* ... 111

Some Non-Hypertensive Ophthalmological Changes in Ghanaian Hypertensives.
*Maria Hagan, C. O. Quarcoopome, J.O. M. Pobee and E.B. Larbi* ....117

SPECIAL ARTICLE
A Review of Paediatric Aids.
*J. E. Neequaye & A.R.Neequaye* ......122

ANNOUNCEMENT :
Residency, in Diagnostic Cytopathology by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. ......136

**Vol 23 number 1 March 1989**

EDITORIAL: In retrospect and in prospect ....6

PREMILINARY REPORT

Monitoring Diabetes Control
*S. K. Owusu* ...17

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Electroencephalographic Classification of Epilepsy in Accra.
*P.K.Nyame* ... 20

Sensorineural Hearing Loss in Ghanaians with Sickle Cell disease.
*George Ankra-Badu & Komli-Kofi Atsina* ...23

Campylobacter Enteritis in Ghana.

Gel Filtration in the Assay of Ascitic Fluid Alkaline Phosphatase.
*M. A. Atoba, A. R. Adelaja, I.O Olubuyide* ...34

Absence of both Sickle-cell trait and G-6-PD Deficiency in a malaria region of rural East Africa.
*D. Robinson, E. A. Bevan, I. K. Tetteh, J. Day* ......37

CASE REPORTS

Concomitant Haemoglobin C disease and Glucose-6-Phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency.
A parasitaemic Phase of Falciparum Malaria and the diagnosis of Malaria.
E.H. Frimpong & J. Kamkam .....43

SPECIAL ARTICLES

Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase deficiency and affective disorders.
N. M. Woolhouse .....45

The Early Medical Journals of East and West Africa.
D. B. Addo ...52

BOOK REVIEW

Global impact of aids .....59

ANNOUNCEMENT

International Conference on emergency Health Care development .....60

Vol 23 number 2 June 1989

LEADING ARTICLES

The "A" Level Aggregate and Medical School Examination Performance.
N.M. Woolhouse, E.Q. Archampong. .....67

"A" Level Subject Performance and Sex in relation to Medical School Examination performance.
N.M. Woolhouse, E.Q.Archampong .....74

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Deliberate Self Harm in Ghana. M.A. Roberts, B.C. Nkum ............ 81
Pregnancy related Acute Renal Failure In Ghana. R.K. Affram, M.O. Mate-Kole ....... 89
Bacterial Vaginosis In Ghanaian Women attending Obstetric and Gynaecology Clinic in regional Teaching Hospital. T. Ohene Adiei; T. Agbemadzo ....... 93

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Childhood Deaths from Unnatural Causes and Brief Illness at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, 1986-1987.
J.O.O. Commeay ........ 101

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Prostatectomy in a Rural Setting. Eugene J. Gibney .. 107

Comparative Analysis of Dental Caries in Patients attending Komfo AnokyeTeaching Hospital. J.A. Amoateng..................... 111

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Executive Council members of GMA .................. 115
The President's address.................. 116
Vol 23 number 3 September 1989

LEADING ARTICLES
Monitoring Disease Patterns at the District Level: The Suhum Experience (II) Utilization Patterns.
 GA. Ashitey, A.O.C. Nettey Marbell .....127

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Vertigo in Accra. P.K. Nyame ........131

Sensorinural Hearing Loss in Ghanaians with Diabetes Mellitus.
 KK Atsina, S.K Arthur, K O. M. Adubofour, F. Ofiei .....135

Comparative Clinical Study of the Effectiveness of Elaeophorbia Drupifera and Metronidazole in Guinea Worm Infection.
 E. Ayitey-Smith, GA. Ashitey, Rosemary Richardson, S. Adjei ... 139

Laboratory Investigation of Suspected Cases of Chromosomal Abnormalities at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital.
 C.N.B. Tagoe, E. T. Sowah; A.S. Ayett, N.N.L. Engmann ....143

Awareness and Attitudes of Prostitutes to Aids in Jos, Nigeria.
 Pauline N. Otti, J.O. Egere ..... 149

CLINICAL PRACTICE
Extent of the Problem of Adolescent Pregnancy in Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital.
 D.A. Ampofo .......................................................... 155

CASE STUDY
Fulminating Viral Hepatitis Associated with Acute Falciparum Malaria.
 J.H. Addy................................................................. 161

CASE REPORT
 O.O. Akute, I. Lawani, E.O. Nkposong .......... 165

ASSOCIATION NEWS
Proposed New Code on Infant Feeding ..... 168

VOL. 23 NUMBER 4 1989

SPECIAL ISSUE: SEMINAR REPORT ON MALARIA IN GHANA.
Malaria in Ghana: An overview
 Epidemiology of malaria of malaria in Ghana. K. Ahmed.....190
 Clinical presentation of malaria in Ghana. J.O.O. Commey ....197
 Response of P.falciparum to chloroquine . F. Meima .....203
 Laboratory diagnosis of malaria. C. Bannerman-Williams ....209
 Malaria chemoprophylaxis (panel discussion) ....211-217
 Review of P.falciparum Resistance to Antimalarial drugs. Janet Neequaye ......223
In vitro response of P.falciparum to chloroquine, amodiaquine, quinine and sulfadoxine/pyrimethamine in Ghana.  

In vivo and in vitro sensibility of P.falciparum to chloroquine in three communities in Ghana  
E.A. Afari, B.D. Akanmori, T. Nakano, D. Ofori-Adjei, B. Gyan, S. Owusu-Adjei and A.A. Adjei......233

The place of herbal medicine in the treatment of malaria in Ghana.  
G.L. Boye.....239

Treatment of malaria in Ghana: summary of present state.  
D. Ofori-Adjei......243

Strategies for malaria control within the primary health care system.  
S. Adjei.....249

Strategies to reduce the spread of P.falciparum resistant strains in Ghana (panel discussion). .....255-269

VOL. 24 NUMBER 1 March 1990

SPECIAL ISSUE:
PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND GHANA-JAPAN JOINT SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
Current trends in the Diagnosis, Treatment, Control and Prevention of Communicable Diseases and Malnutrition in Ghana.

CONTENTS
Conference Planning and Implementation Committee............. ii
Acknowledgements....................................... ii
Opening Session Opening Address - A. Sawyerr...... 1
Address - A. Shishido ......... 2
Keynote Address - G.L. Monekosso ...... 4
Chairman's Remarks Nana A. Sarpong ........... 8

SCIENTIFIC SESSION
Two dose immunization trial with the trivalent oral polio-myelitis vaccine (TOPV) in Ghana.  
M. Osei-Kwasi, T. Yoshii and J.A.A. Mingle ...... 9

Antibody response to measles immunization at seven months old in rural Ghanaian infants.  
H. Sakatoku, T. Nakano and E.A. Afari ...... 13

The role of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) in the control of communicable Diseases and malnutrition in Ghana.  
E.A. Afari 16

Survey of enteropathogenic agents in children with and without diarrhoea in Ghana.  

Microbiological quality of fresh water prawns (Macrobrachium spp) from the Volta river and its possible health implications.  
C. Amoah, G.T. Odamtten and D. A. Agbodaze .................28

Nutrition and child development.  
J.O.O. Commey ...... 37

Vol. 24 number 2 June 1990
CONTENTS
LEADING ARTICLES
Chronobiology and its applications in a developing country such as Ghana.
S. K Arthur, Germaine Cornelissen F . Halberg .... 101
Akafo Stephen K, Hagan Maria .... 113

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Nutritional status of Ghanaian children in Old Tafo and Donyina in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.
Mrs. E. A. Gyebi - Ofosu .......... 120
Comparative study of atrial granule concentration at the nuclear pole of atrial cells of the insect - eating bat P@istrellus Pipistrellus and the Wistar rat.
P. Ocansey, A. S. Ayettey, C. N. B. Tagoe ... 126
Cardiovascular responses to aqueous extracts of the seeds of Cassia occidentalis in' Conscious unrestrained
Brattleboro rats. A. B. A. Prempeh .......... 132
Knowledge, attitudes and practices about AIDS in Kumasi. Amofah, G. K ....141
Aetiology, management and complications of epistaxis in Ghana.
G. W. Brobbey, F. - O. Ofosu – Barko .......... 144

CASE REPORT
A case of iliac artery aneurysm arising from herniorrhaphy and its management.
W. M. Hodasi .......... 149

SHORT REPORT
Antimicrobial resistance of urinary isolate in Accra.
Mercy J. Newman .......................................................... 154

Vol. 24 number 3 September 1990

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Inheritance of hypertension. F.l.D. Konotey Ahulu ..........160
Mendelian Inheritance of propranolol responsive hypertension in an Extended Ghanaian family.
Jonathan H. Addy .........................164
Presentation and clinical course of end stage Renal failure in Ghana - a preliminary prospective study.
M.O. Mate-Kale & R.K. Affram ...............170
Red cell antigens in the Ga Ethnic Group of Ghana. J.K Acquaye .........177
Costs and benefits of chest radiography for routine medical examinations.
KB. Jumah .........................183
Pattern of Abdominal injuries in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra.
S.B. Naaeder................................. 186
E.J. Asamoah-Odei, P.M. Antwi, A. Osei & G.K. Akar ........191

CASE REPORTS
Fresh frozen plasma in the treatment of haemotoxic snake bites. S.K Owusu.....201
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection following transfusion of screened blood in Accra, Ghana. Janet Neequaye & Onike Rodrigues ..........................203
Acute infective Endocarditis following abortion.
R.K. Affram & Alfred Neequaye ..........................206

Vol 24 number 4 December 1990

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Acquired Nephrogenic diabetes insipidus complicating acute Tubular Necrosis with acute renal failure.
M.O. Mate-Kole & R.K. Affram ...........213
Pyogenic meningitis in the tropical rainforest of Kumasi/Ghana.
J. W Acheampong; K. Ohene Adjei & P. Bawuah ........218
Ligation of Hypogastric artery in severe primary postpartum haemorrhage (1º PPH) due to atonic uterus.
T.S. Ghosh & E. Y. Kwawukume .............223
Effect of Antimalarial drugs and cations on rabbit uterine 17β-Estradiol Dehydrogenase activity.
F.O. Mensah & E.E. Anato-Dumelo ..........227
A survey of skin diseases seen at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra.
H.A. ADDO ........232

ABO Blood groups and Cerebrovascular accident in Nigerians. N.A. Danesi & OA. Afonja ........239
Clinical analysis and comparative management of Epilepsy in the Accra Psychiatric Hospital.
S.N.A. Turkson ..................................243
Drug use before clinic attendance. L. Osei & HA. Beecham .................249
Acupuncture analgesia in severe Sickle cell painful crisis.
G.A. Ankra-Badu, G. Ampoma- Twumasi & Zhang Xue-Ling .......... 255

CASE REPORTS
Small intestinal obstruction secondary to Peritoneal Encapsulation - A case report.
S.B. Naaeder & E.O. Archampong ......................260

Situs inversus totalis and infarcted gut in the elderly.
J.N.E ANA..............................................263

Vol 25 number 1&2 March-June 1991

EDITORIAL
Eye diseases in Ghana. C.O. Quarcoopome............................... 266

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Traumatic Ocular injuries: a survey of 380 cases treated in Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi.
M. Adu-Darko......................... 268
Primary open angle Glaucoma at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. A need for glaucoma screening in Ghana.
Maria Hagan, S. Akafo, F. Acheampong; Edith Ackuaku, F. Odame, Theresa Oduro, Josepha Mensah ....... 275
causes of blindness in southern Ghana as seen at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi.

M. Adu Darko 280

The progestin-only contraceptive (minipill) in breastfeeding Ghanaian women.


Management of Labour with umbilical cord prolapse – revisited.

T.S. Ghosh, E.Y. Kwawukume 295

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus and other rheumatic disorders: clinical experience in Accra.

R.K Affram & A.R. Neequaye 299

Nuclear Medicine in Ghana. R.K Affram & J. Amuasi 303

Hysterosalpingography in Ghanaian women. K.B. Jumah 309

The prevalence of Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) among blood donors and jaundiced patients at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital.

J. W. Acheampong 313

The rate of absorption and utilization of D-Glucose by normal and protein-energy malnourished Ghanaian children.

J.P. Mensah-Kordieh; R. Amoako-Adu; K Nsiah 318

CASE STUDIES

A case of the "CHARGE" association.

M. Anyebuno .328

Spurious resistance of P. falciparum to quinine.

D. Ofori-Adjei; M.O. Mate-Kole 331

Vol 25 number 3&4 Sept - Dec 1990

ORIGINAL ARTICLES


J. O. O. Commey 334

Profile of Neurological conditions in Accra. P.K Nyame 342

Bacterial Meningitis in southern Ghana: a 3-year review of bacterial isolates.

M. J. Newman 349

Causes of deferral and disqualification of potential blood donors.

J.K Acquaye 355

Increased risk of serious bacterial and viral infections in acutely ill patients with malaria parasitaemia.

J.H. Addy 360

Hepatitis B Surface antigen carriers among Ghanaian blood donors.

J.K. Acquaye 366

Child care practices of Ilorin mothers: Implication for community control of severe acute respiratory infections.

F. Doyin, D.B. Parakoyi 370

A public education campaign against AIDS in Ghana and an evaluation of the response.

A.R. Neequaye, I.E. Neequaye, R.I. Biggar 377

Who controls the resources? A case study of the decentralisation of District Health Service financing in Ghana.

C. Waddington & N.A. Coleman 385

CASE STUDIES
A Togolese boy with Chylous Ascites.  J. T. Arthur .......... 399


**ORIGINAL ARTICLES**

AIDS Awareness Amongst Students of Second Cycle Institutions in the Greater Accra Region.

Technique of Delivery of the After Coming Head in Breech Presentation.
T.S. Ghosh, E.Y. Kwawukume ........................................ 418

Delivery of Impacted Fetal Head at Caesarean Section - Surgical Technique.
T.S. Ghosh, E.Y. Kwawukume ........................................ 423


Photochemotherapy of Vitiligo with Oral Trioxsalen and Tropical Sunlight.
J. H. Addy .......................................................... 431

Red Cell Antigens in the Ewes of Ghana.  J.K. Acquaye ................. 438

A Clinical Study of Hydroquinone Reaction in Skin Bleaching in Ghana.
H.A. Addo ....................... 448

The Incidence of Meniere's Disease in Kumasi- Ghana.  G. W. Brobby .... 454

C. Ntim-Amponsah, J. Abbey, J. Kansaabayel .......... 460

Psychiatric Disorders Associated with Childbirth Among Ghanaian Women- Illustrative Cases.
S.N.A. Turkson .................. 467

T.A.R. Akeng’A, s.c. Chhabra .......... 471

**CASE STUDIES**

A Case of Werdnig-Hoffman Disease.  O. Rodrigues ............476

Holt-Oram Syndrome in a Ghanaian Infant  J.E. Welbeck. ... 478

**Vol 27-28  1993-1994**

**EDITORIAL**

A Therapeutic Plan for Hypertension.  J.H. Addy ............. 487

**ORIGINAL ARTICLES**
Some Aspects of Blood Transfusion Practice In West Africa.
J.K Acquaye...... 490

R.B Biritwum, P.K Nyame .................................................. 499

A Comparative Study of Isradipine and Nifedipine in the Monotherapy of Mild to Moderate Hypertension in the Ghanaian.

Prevalence of Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg) in 3 Selected Communities in the Ashanti Region - Ghana.
J. W. Acheampong, P.A. Twumasi Jr .............................................. 516

Nutritional Rickets in Ghanaian Children.
James T Arthur, J.E Welbeck, B.A. Kuma........................................... 520

Antimicrobial Susceptibility of Neisseria gonorrhoea in Kumasi. Y.A. Adu-Sarkodie ... 529

KN. Nkrumah, EQ. Archampong, I.B. Quartey-Papafio, D. Ofori-Adjei, A. Nakajima 536

Comparison of Estimates of Gestational Age Using Last Menstrual Date, Biparietal Diameter, and Ballard score.
J.N. Inungu, EA. Addy ...........................................................543

Varicocelectomy: What Benefits to the Infertile Ghanaian Male?
George O. Klufio .................................................. 549

Propranolol, Diazepam and their Combination in the Management of Chronic Anxiety in the Ghanaian Patient.
K Addo-Kufour, Yaw Osei .................................................. 554

Fluoride Content of Toothpastes in Accra. C.A. Botchway.... 561

CASE REPORTS


Duodenal Duplication - A Rare Congenital Abnormality. Two Case Reports.
Afua A.J. Hesse, Michael Ohene-Yeboah, Chris Kotei .................... 569

Posterior Urethral Valves Induced Micturition Syncope in a Ghanaian Boy.
James T Arthur............................................................... 575
Letters to the Editor .......................................................... 579

Vol 29 1995

EDITORIAL
The Problem of Buruli Ulcer in Ghana. J.H. Addy 587

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Control and Management of Buruli Ulcer Disease. G.K. Amofah .... 589
*Mycobacterium Ulcerans* Infection (Buruli Ulcer) in the Ga District of the Greater Accra Region.  
*H.A Addo* .................................................................595

The Korle-Bu Surgical Experience of Buruli Ulcer.  *Afua A.J. Hesse,* .............. 603

Review of Carotid Angiograms in Evaluation of Intra Cranial Lesions Prior to the Advent of Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan in Ghana.  *K.Boateng Jumah, B. Puplampu*... 613

Cardiac Lesions in "Trisomy 21" Ghanaian Children.  
*James T. Arthur* ........................................................................................................ 617

HIV Seroprevalence in Three Population Groups.  
*Y.A. Adu-Sarkodie* ................................................................................................. 621

A Comparative Study of Hystersalpingography and Laparoscopy in the Investigation of Infertility.  
*K. Boateng Jumah, A.H.K. Collison* ................................................ 625

Preoperative Haematological Investigation in Paediatric Patients for Elective Surgery.  
*Gladys Amponsah* ........................................ 630

Will Genetic Counselling Be Effective in Controlling Sickle Cell Disease in Ghana?  
*Onike Rodrigues, Janet Neequaye* .... 636

Incidence of Cancer in Enugu State, Nigeria.  
*Christy U. Eze* ..................................................... 644

Aspects of the Ecology and Public Health Importance of Snails in the Weija Lake.  
*Prince Charles Zuta* .................................................................654

CASE REPORTS

The Anaesthetic Management of a Case of Phaeochromocytoma.  
*K. Henderson, H. Baddoo* .............................................................................. 664

Two Ghanaian Girls with Solitary Left Kidneys.  *James T. Arthur* ............ 670

*Staphylococcus aureus* Causes Honeycomb - Lung in a Ghanaian Child.  
*James T. Arthur* ................. 676

Books ......................... 684

Vol 30 1996

EDITORIAL

Ghana Medical Journal is Now Up to Date  *J.H. Addy* ........................................ 689

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Cleanliness and Health.  *G.A. Ashitey* 691

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Poor Waste Disposal Along the Coast.  *Frank Nyonator* ................................. 692

Polymyositis and Dermatomyositis Associated with Non-Malignant Systemic Diseases.  
*M.O Mate-Kole, E.K. Owiredu, J.H. Addy* ..............................................697

Mental Disorders and HIV Infection - The Accra Psychiatric Hospital Experience.  
*J.B. Asare, P. Koranteng* .................................704

Perinatal Mortality in Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra  *M. Anyebuno* .... 710

A Study of Psychiatric Referrals in Accra, Ghana.  
*S.N.A. Turkson & Nortey Dua* ..........................................................715

A Review of Prolonged Pregnancy at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra.  
*J.D. Seffah. E. Y. Kwawukume* .................................719
Vanishing Twins and Ultrasonography. E. Y. Kwawukume: T.S. Ghosh 723
Birth Before Arrival at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra.
M. Anyebuno, E.-Y. Kwawukume .......................... 726

Cold and Posture Induced Cardiovascular Reactivity in Normotensive Ghanaians.
J.H. Addy, Beatrice Bediako ........................................ 732

Psychiatric Disorders Among University Students in Ghana (1987-1994).
S.N.A. Turkson ................................................................. 738

Testicular torsion in Ghanaians: Characteristics and Salvage Rate.
G.O. Klufio, J.K.M. Quartey ........................................... 743

CASE REPORTS
Disseminated BCG Infection in HIV-Infected Infants - Two Case Reports.
Eugene Nyarko................................................................. 746

Caesarean Section Prompted by Late Diagnosis of Dead Fetus Due to Multiple Congenital
Anomalies A.T. Lassey, Y. Tettey, W.K. Kesse .................................. 749

Multiple lung abscesses due to concurrent mycobacterium tuberculosis and other necrotizing bacterial
infections. I. F.A. Hesse ........................................... 752

Phagedenic Genital Ulcer. Y.A. Adu-Sarkodie .............................. 756

Fellowship of GMA - 1995-96 ............................................. 759
Examination Results ............................................................. 766

Vol 31a 1997

EDITORIAL
Comments on the Health Service. J.H. Addy ...........777

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

The use of an Oxytocic Agent in the Management of the Third Stage of Labour.

Admission Pattern of Sickle Cell Disease in Children in the Assir Region of Saudi Arabia.
F.K. Adraku, S.H. Annobil ...................... 789

Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia Causing Infant Deaths in a Family. Eugenia Ofori-Adjei.......796

An Outbreak of Influenza A (H 3 N 2) in Accra in 1996.
J.A.A Mingle, E. Ofori -Adjei, D. Ofori-Adjei, Samuel O. Sackey ... 799

Prevalence of Treponema pallidum Antibodies in Sera of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
B.D. Akanmori………….. 802

Are Opioid Addicts Depressed"? J.J. Lamptey .............................. 805

CASE REPORTS
An Unusual Cause of Priapism. H.A. Kwarko. I.K. Bentsi ... .......812
A Successful Pregnancy in a Patient with a Solitary Kidney. A.H.K. Collison ……820

HEALTH CARE ISSUES
Justice in Healthcare - A Study at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi.
John Appian-Poku ……………………………………826
Personal View of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Alma Ata Declaration:
Health by all by the Year 2000. Hon. K Addo-Kufour …………………829.
Speech by the Hon. Minister of Health. Dr. Eunice Brookman-Amissah……832
Annual General Meeting of GMA, 1997 ………………837

VOL 31b 1997

EDITORIAL
The Importance of Chemotherapy (Antibiotics and Cytotoxics) in the Control / Prevention of
Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
J.H. Addy (Editor-in-Chief) …………………………………841
Multi-Drug Resistant T.B. A.R. Neequaye ………….. 848

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
HIV Infection in Tuberculosis Patients in Kumasi. E.H. Frimpong, S. Lawn, P. Antwi, B. Dwemoh, B.
Afuil, I. W. Acheampong ……………………………. 850

Community Urine Survey 1: Asymptomatic Bacteura in Schoolgirls in Kumasi.
E. H. Frimpong, S.C.K. Tay …………………….. 855

Blood Transfusion Practice in District Hospitals. J.K. Acquaye………. 859

Pathological Findings in the Placenta and Umbilical Cord in Late Fetal Deaths (Stillbirths) at the Korle-
bu Teaching Hospital. Y. Tetteh, E.K. Wiredu … 864

Polymorphic Oxidation of Sparteine and Debrisoquine: Related Pharmacogenetic Entities. Asante-
Kudzi………………875

CASE REPORTS
Case of Culture Proven Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in Ghana. I.F. Adukwei. Hesse. ………… 881
Adult Hypertrophic Pyloric Stenosis. E.H. Takyi………………………… 884

ASSOCIATION NEWS
Annual General Meeting of GMA, 1997………………….. 887
Fellowship Awards 1997………………………….. 888
Letter to the Editor………………………… 894

VOL 32a 1998

EDITORIAL
Large differences in Maternal Mortality figures for Ghana and between developed and Developing
Countries. J.H. Addy (Editor-in-Chief). ………903
EDITORIAL COMMENT
Breast feeding  Jennifer Welbeck ....... 905

Original articles
Anyetei T. Lassey, John R. Wilson  910

Determination of Maternal Health in Ghana. E.O. Tawiah ..... 917

Changing breastfeeding Patterns Among Multiparous Women in Korle-Bu Hospital. A.T. Lassey .......926

Incidence of hypertension in a Ghanaian Prison. I.F.Adukwei. Hesse ..... 935

Eye camp in Sefwi District: Reaching the Under-Served.
Maria Hagan, Edith Ackuaku, A. Y. Asare, Isaac Sagoe, Thomas Tontie-Baah….941

The isolation of Insulin Recetor Serine Kinase. Kojo A. Asamoah…….947

Comparison of Laboratory Recetors for-Detection of Helicobacter Pylori.
Agatha Ani, A.O. Malu, c.s.s. Bello, E.N. Okeke, J.O. Adisa…953

CASE REPORT
Primary vascular Leiomyosarcoma of the Testis - A case report ..
Y. Tetteh, R. Darko, A.B. Akosa

Vol. 32b 1998

EDITORIAL
The Peer Review Process. J.H. Addy (editor-in-Chief) ........ 967

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Review of Myelograms in Evaluation of Spinal Lesions Prior to the Advent of Computed Tomography (CT) Scan in Ghana. K.B. Jumah, B. Puplampu ..... 972

A Survey of Paediatric Trauma in Kumasi - A Hospital-Based Study.
F.A. Abanianga, C.N. Mock ..... 977

Continuing Role of Splenorenal Shunt in Ghana. W.M. Hodasi...... 981

Congenital Abnormalities in Stillbirths at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital- A Study of 93 Stillbirths.
Y. Tettey, E.K. Wriedu ...........986


Abdominal Wound Infection Complicating Caesarean Section ..
K.A. Danso, Y. Adu-Sarkodie............... 1003

Peter Donkor … 1009
A Retrospective Survey of Surgically Treated Utero-Vaginal Prolapse at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. H.S. Opare-Addo ....1013

Eclampsia: An Outlook on Prevention at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital.
S.A. Obed .... 1017

Sudden Death in an Asymptomatic 26-Year Old Ghanaian Male Adult from Undiagnosed Hypertrophic Obstructive Cardiomyopathy.
Y. Tettey, R. Kumoji ..... 1022

Vol 33 number 1 March 1999

EDITORIAL
D. Ofori-Adjei (Editor-in-chief) ............ 1

EDITORIAL COMMENT
Male Breast Cancers. R. Darko ..... 2

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Male Breast Cancers in Ghana. A. B. Akosa, F.O. Ampadu, Y. Tettey ...3

Breast Cancer Screening in Ghana: Is There A Need? B. N Baako .......... 9

Waterborne Parasitic Diseases Associated with Fish Farms.
P. C. Zuta, M.A. Odei ......... 13

The Role of Street Food Vendors in the Transmission of Enteric pathogens in Accra.
P. Mensah, K. Owusu-Darko, D. Yebooh-Manu, A. Ablordey, F. K. Nkrumah, H. Kamiya ........... 19

The Ghana - Carnegie Postgraduate Program in Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

ASSOCIATION NEWS
GMA News and Notices ................................................................. r 35
Abstracts of Scientific Presentations, 40th AGM .............. 37
Address by the President of GMA, 40 AGM ...............................39
Fellowship Awards, 1998 ..............................................................43
Letter to the Editor .................................................................47

Vol 33 number 2 June 1999

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Quality of Care at Cape Coast Central Hospital, Ghana: Users' Perspective.
Impact of Improved Eye Care Services on Time of Diagnosis of Primary Open Angle Glaucoma
E. M. Ackuaku and Maria Hagan.............. 56

Informed Consent and Patient Compliance - A Pilot Study at the Psychiatric Out-Patient Clinic of the Komfo A okye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi J. Appiah-Opoku ...... 61


Influence of Analgesic Delivery Technique on Restoration of Bowel function after Colo-Rectal Surgery. S. A. Debrah, A. R. Garnett, C. M. Kumar, R. G. Wilson, W. A. Corbett ...... 77


Determinants of Maternal Mortality in Eclampsia at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra Ghana. S. A. Obed, J. B. Wilson and Alice Sackey .... 86

ASSOCIATION NEWS
GMA News .......................................................... 90
President’s keynote address (CME symposium, Northern sector) ............91

Vol 33 number 3 Sept 1999

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Parity, birth intervals and family planning experience of mothers delivered at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Ghana C.A. Klufio, B. Annan and A. T. Lassey .... 95

Physical and sexual violence against pregnant women attending Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana. K. A. Danso and Helen Lamprey..... 101

Serum.cholesterol levels of male blood donors at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana. E. Asibey-Berko and V. M. Avorkliyah................. 104

Reconstruction of the nose and lips - A case report P. Donkor .... 108

Dental diseases in Ghanaians - A review of the literature I. Bruce....... 111

Maxillofacial injuries at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. A preliminary study G. Parkins ............. 120

Oral manifestations of AIDS in Ghana A. E. Abdulai ...... 123

Primary salivary gland tumors in Accra, Ghana R. K. Gyasi and A. B. Akosa .... 128

ASSOCIATION NEWS
Guidelines for Contributors ...... 133
Vol 34 number 1 March 2000

EDITORIAL
D. Ofori-Adjei (Editor-in-chief) ............................................................. 1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Coverage evaluation of essential obstetric care at the Primary Health Care Level
S. Kyei-Faried, M. S. Ayi, L. E. Visser ... 2

A study of socio-cultural and anthropometric risk factors associated with Vesica-vaginal fistula among Hausa women of Northern Nigeria
Durrenda Onolemhemhen, Tanya E. Perry, C. C. Ekwempu

Anaesthesia manpower recruitment at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital -A survey of house officers. H. K. Baddoo ............. 15

Antimicrobial susceptibility of pneumococci colonising the nasopharynx of Children with sickle cell disease. B. Baffoe-Bonnie, Y. Adu-Sarkodie, Paulina Twumasi .... 18


Visual defect among professional drivers in Accra. Edith M. Ackuaku..................... 24

CASE REPORT
Inflammatory bowel disease at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.
K. N. Nkrumah ........... 32

ASSOCIATION NEWS
Address by the President of GMA, 41st AGM... .36
Fellowships and Merit Awards 1999 .......... 46
GMA News and Reviewers for 1999 ...... 51
Guidelines for contributors .......... 52

Vol 34 number 2 June 2000

EDITORIAL

Current Literature Mr. Daniel B. Addo .. .........................54

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

A comparative study of the effectiveness of mouthwash, toothpaste and chewing stick as inhibitors of bacterial growth
A retrospective analysis of police medical report form (CID Form 98)  
C K. Osabutey, P. Donkor, D. N. Amon-Kotei. ... 60

Oral Chloroquine in the treatment of cerebral malaria in Ghanaian Children  

Laboratory diagnosis of typhoid fever in Accra  
P. Mensah, R. Noora, I. Welbeck, P. K. Nyame ... 67

J. J. Lamptey ......... 75

Thirty years in academia anniversary lecture: Public health is public wealth.  
G. A. Ashitey .......... 79

CASE REPORT

Hepatolithiasis - A report of two cases  
K. A. Boateng .......... 81

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Current Literature .......... 84  
Corrigendum .......... 89  
Guidelines for contributors .... 90

Vol 34 number 3 Sept 2000

EDITORIAL

Health Sector Reforms and the application’ of Sector-wide Approach in Ghana  
D. Ofori-Adjei .................................137

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

P. Donkor, K. A. Boateng .................................................................139

Squamous cell carcinoma associated with prolonged bleaching. H.A. Addo .....139

Tuberculosis associated deaths: a comparative autopsy study in Accra, Ghana.  
R. K. Gyasi, R, Kumoji, A. B. Akosa ... 147

An autopsy study of maternal deaths  
B. Aboagye, A. B. Akosa ......152

Detection of human group C rotavirus in Ghanaian children  
G. E. Armah, E. K. Essel, R. H. Asmah, F. R. Anto, F. N Binka...157

Congenital rubella syndrome in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
C. Oduro-Boatey, J. Neequaye, B. Goka……….165

Effective akinesia from single injection retrobulbar block
C. Kumar, B. J. McNeela, C. Snowden, N. Dhariwal……….168

Association News
Current literature …………………..172
GMA News………………………...179

Vol 34 number 4 December 2000

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
A descriptive clinical survey of 228 perinatal deaths at KBTH
Peripartum complications of undiagnosed twin pregnancy at KBTH, Accra, Ghana
J O. Martey and E. K. Wiredu.................. 185

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
A descriptive clinical survey of 228 perinatal deaths at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.
S. A. Obed, K. Nkyerkyer, Alice Sackey, Patience Aniteye and C. A. Klufio  ?Page

Peripartum complications of undiagnosed twin pregnancy at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana
S. A. Obed .............. 193

Pattern of diseases or conditions leading to hospitalisation at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Ghana in 1996
R. B. Biritwum, J Gulaid and A. O. Amaning...... 197

Pattern of breast disease in Ghana
E. Asumanu, R. Vowotor and S. B. Naaeder ... 206

Quality of care of patients undergoing cataract surgery under local anaesthesia
C. A. Kumar and C. Dodds ........ 214

ASSOCIATION NEWS
Current Literature.........................218
Address by the President of GMA, 42nd AGM................... 225
GMA News/Notice and Reviewers for 2000 … 236

Vol 35 number 1 March 2001

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Trauma system development in Ghana

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Casualty trends in road traffic accidents
R E. Quansah, F K Afukaar, M Salifu …. 4

Availability of emergency medical services along major highway
R. E. Quansah……….8

Management of urethral discharge in pharmacies in the Ashanti Region - A baseline survey
Y. Adu-Sarkodie .................................. 11
Skin manifestations of HIV/AIDS in adults in Ghana Margaret Laney ............. 15

Assessment of three parasitological techniques commonly used in detecting Helminth protozoan infections in Nigeria N.C.D. Ukwandu, S.C. Nwaosu, J.D. Chikwem ..... 20

Serotypes and antibiogram of shigella species isolated in Accra, Ghana Mercy J. Newman.............26

CASE REPORT
A case of toothache following a Caldwell-LVC antrostomy O. Gorleku, P. Donkor ........................................................... 38

ASSOCIATION NEWS
Current Literature ............................................. 40
GMA News and Notices ....................................... 46
Fellowship Awards 2000 ..............47

Vol 35 number 2 June 2001

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Complete hydatidiform moles in Ghana E. Y. Kwawukume ........ 50

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Caring for the poor – evaluation of exemption practices within health facilities F. Nyonator, S. Diamenu, E Aniedo, J. Eleeza.................60

Training of non-radiologist medical doctors in ultrasound in Ghana K.B. Jumali, W.O. Brakohiapa, M.G. Obajinii, J.O. Armah, J.D. Seffah, J. Kragt.........................66

Head injury in Ghanaians - evaluation by computed tomography Millicent O. Obajimi, K.B. Juniah, WO. Brakooliapa, M. Iddrisu.................69

A survey of hereditary colour vision defect in Ghanaian students. Christine T. Ntim-Amponsah, R.D.H. Edirisuriya ........................................75


A review of complete hydatidiform moles in Ghana A.B. Akosa, F.O. Ampadu, R.K. Gyasi....................................................85

Treatment of breast cancer in Accra: 5 year survival B.N. Baako, E.A. Badoe........90

CASE REPORTS
Ondansetron for the prevention of epidural fentanyl induced pruritus C.M. Kumar.................................................................94
Fatal acute renal failure following copper sulphate nephrotoxicity
M.O. Mate-Kole, J.H. Addy, R.K. Affram

GMA News and Notices

Vol 35 number 3 Sept 2001

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Mental health in Ghana
J.B. Asare

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Types of psychiatric illness at traditional healing centres in Ghana
A. O. Osei

Witchcraft and depression - A study into the psychopathological features of alleged witches
A. O. Osei

Social adjustments of a group discharged substance abusers
J. J. Lamptey

Kleine-Levin Syndrome: a rare or a missed diagnosis? A. O. Osei

Maternal mortality at Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital, Western Region, Ghana. A one year review (January - December, 1998) S. Osei-Nketia

Female genital mutilation and reproductive health morbidity in second cycle school girls in Bolgatanga district K. Odoi-Agyarko and A. A. Batong

CASE REPORTS
Secondary erotomanic symptoms in three Ghanaian schizophrenic patients J. J. Lamptey

Massive persistent lower gastrointestinal haemorrhage secondary to typhoid fever N. A. Adu-Aryee, H. K. Aduful and F. Edwin

ASSOCIATION NEWS
GMA News and Notices

Vol 35 number 4 December 2001

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Stroke: Risk factors and factors predicting survival J.W. Acheampong

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Factors predicting survival of acute stroke patients at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi  
B.A. Eghan Jnr., C. Frimpong, J. W. Acheampong ........... 150

Stroke mortality in Accra: A study of risk factors  
E.K. Wiredu, P.K. Nyame ........ 155

Bacterial contaminants in lettuce, tomatoes, beef and goat meat from the Accra Metropolis. Patience Mensah, M. Armar-Klemesu, A.S. Hammond, A. Haruna, R. Nyarko ............... 162

Barriers to the management of chronic simple glaucoma  
Edith M. Ackuaku .......... 168

Ameloblastoma of the jaws in Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra: Analysis of 48 cases  
A.E. Abdulai, R.K. Gyasi........................................... 172

Schistosomiasis of the female genital tract  
A.B. Akosa, L.K. Kuma ........ 178

A review of choriocarcinomas in Ghana  
R.K. Gyasi, F.O. Ampadu, A.B. Akosa ..... 189

CASE REPORT

Cardiopulmonary bypass surgery in sickle cell disease: An update  

ASSOCIATION NEWS

13rd AGM - President's Address ........ 198
Fellowship Award 2001. .................. 206
MA News and Notices ...................... 21

Vol 36 number 1 2002

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

A Postgraduate Medical College for Ghana  
D. Ofori-Adjei................................. 1

A National Postgraduate Medical College for Ghana: the position of the Ghana Medical Association  
J. Plange-Rhule 1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Postgraduate Medical education in Ghana  
P.K. Nyame................................. 4

Characteristics of twin births at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital  
K. Nkyekyer ............ 8

Newborn screening for inherited metabolic disorders and haemoglobinopathies at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital  

Burkitt's lymphoma and the general practitioner  
I. Bruce and Grace Parkins 20

Congestive cardiac failure in Accra, Ghana - Opportunity and challenges  
J.O.M. Pobee, R.B. Biritwum and D. W. Belcher 29

The distribution of salmonella antibodies, total protein, albumin and transferrin levels in maternal and cord blood in Nigerians  
G.O. Oyeyinka, B.A. Aiyedun, O.O. Adetoro ............... 34
CASE REPORTS
Abolishing self-injurious behaviour (S.I.B.) with an opiate antagonist  
*Ewusi-Mensah I.*  
38

Osteomyelitis of the maxilla presenting as orbital cellulitis in a child  
*Parkins Grace and Ackuaku Edith.*  
41

**Vol 36 number 2 2002**

EDITORIAL COMMENTRY
Cancer in Ghana  
*E. Q. Archanpong.*  
47

Trauma at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital: A study of 2022 patients  
*Abantanga F. A., Mock C. N., London J., and Quausah R. E.*  
49

A preliminary study of self care behaviour among Ghanaians with diabetes mellitus  
*Ofei F., Forson A. and Appiah-Kusi J.*  
54

Abortion at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital  
*Turpin C. A., Danso K. A. and Odoi A. T.*  
60

Practical ways of improving family planning coverage  
*Yeboah-Awudzi K.*  
65

Primary congenital glaucoma treated by modified trabeculectomy  
*Adu Darko M.*  
72

Xerophthalmia in malnourished children in Accra  
*Ackuaku Edith M. and Hagan Maria.*  
76

CASE REPORTS
Reversible blindness in pituitary apoplexy  
*Tnim Christine T. and Oddoye Adrian.*  
81

Primary leiomyosarcoma of the lesser omentum  
*Akute O. O. and Oluwasola A. O.*  
85

**Vol 36 number 3 Sept 2002**

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
HIV/AIDS, Food and Nutrition Security: The challenges and way forward  
*Amar-Klemesu Margaret.*  
92

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
HIV/AIDS awareness and sexual behaviour among young people in Ghana  
94

Norplant, a long term contraceptive: is it serving the purpose?  
*Opoku B. and Sengretsi S.*  
102

Fetal biometry in Ghanaian women in Kumasi  
*Opare-Addo H. S., Adadehov W. K., Odoi A. T. and Reindorf E. R.*  
107

Evaluation of intramuscular pethidine versus oral diclofenac for postoperative pain relief in patients undergoing orthopaedic/trauma surgery  
*Boakye G. and Mock C.*  
112
Closed patch test reactions in Ghanaian subjects with suspected contact dermatitis

H.A. Addo ..................................................................................121

Dendritic cells are necessary for the induction of protective immunity against *cryptosporidium parvum* infection in dexamethasone-immunosuppressed mice

A. A. Adjei ............. 124

Corrosive oesophageal stricture seen at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

K. Frimpong-Boateng ...131

CASE REPORT

Coronary arteries from a single coronary ostium: case report and review of current literature

K. Frimpong-Boateng .................................................................136

---

**Vol 36 number 4 December 2002**

**ORIGINAL ARTICLES**

Valve replacement surgery at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital- A review

*K. Frimpong-Boateng* ..................................................................................................................145

Housemanship training and experience in Ghana - A questionnaire survey of House Officers

*A. T. Lassey and F. Ofei* ........................................................................................................150

Impacted foreign bodies in the pharynx and oesophagus at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana

*E.D. Kitcher and R. K. Mensah* ................................................................................................157

Oral tumours seen at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital: A preliminary report

*Grace Parkins, GE Arntali and Y Tettey* .............................................................................160

Clinical features of acute appendicitis: A two-year study in a Surgical Unit at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

*JNA Clegg-Lamptey* ...........................................................................................................164

A 6-year review of rabies (morbidity and mortality) in the Department of Child Health, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

*C Oduru-Boatey, G Wireko-Brobbey and E Seffah* .................................................................172

**CASE REPORTS**

Aorto-oesophageal fistula: An unusual cause of upper gastrointestinal bleeding

*JNA Clegg-Lamptey, Y Tettey, WM Hodasi and C Amenuveve* ........ 176

Spinal cord compression secondary to malignant disease (superior sulcus tumour)

*J. Yarney* .................................................................................................................................178

**ASSOCIATION NEWS**

Address by the President of GMA, 44'h AGM .................................................................182

Fellowship and Special Commendation Awards 2002 ..........................................................188

---

**Vol 37 number 1 March 2003**

**EDITORIAL COMMENTARY**

Opportunistic infection in HIV/AIDS

*RK Afram* 1
ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Trends in HIV infections at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital Fevers Unit: A ten year review
  TA Botwe and Margaret Lartey .................. 3
HIV infection in pulmonary tuberculosis patients admitted to the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana in 1996-1997
  I.F. Adukwei and A.R. Neequaye.................. 7

Caesarean section techniques of obstetricians in Ghana
  K. Nkyekyer ....................................... 12
Discordance in birth weight of twins
  K. Nkyekyer ...................................... 19
Alcohol-induced hepatotoxicity: A study of the effects of the Ghanaian alcoholic beverage, akpeteshie, in the rat
  LKN Okine, AK Nyarko and ESM Ashiabor .................. 29

Association between low blood glutathione level and haptoglobin phenotypes in pregnant women
  N-A Ankrah, IKE Quave, Regina Appiah-Oppong, Comfort Dzokoto, FA Ekuban and K Teve ............... 35

Integrating oral health in primary health care in Ghana
  I Btucc ................................. 39

CASE REPORTS

Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS)
  I Ewusi-Meusah .................................. 45

Penetrating injury of the anterior wall in a child due to a pencil
  KY Kese, Patricia Dwamena and Elizabeth Anane ................................ 47

Vol 37 number 2 June 2003

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Adherence to treatment
  D. Ofori-Adjei ......................... 51

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Appendicitis in Accra: A contemporary appraisal
  J.N.A. Clegg-Lamptey and S.B. Naaeder .... 52

Snake bites: A simple treatment protocol for rural areas
  L.E. Visser and S. Kyei-Faried .................. 57

Prevalence of psychiatric illness in an Urban Community in Ghana
  A.Osei .................. 62

A preliminary study inf the evaluation of drug compliance among psychiatric patients in Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Ghana
  Emma S Mensah and F.A. Yeboah ........ 68

Serum lipids and antioxidants in Ghanaian diabetic, hypertensive and healthy subjects

Serum immunoglobulin (IgG, IgA and IgM) levels in adult Ghanaians

CASE REPORTS

Galactosemia in three Ghanaian children
  Onike Rodrigues and Bamenla Goka .......... 89

Growth hormone deficiency associated with acquired immune deficiency syndrome - cause or coincidence
  F Ofei, J. Appiah-Kusi and Dela Nyonator ............... 93
EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Challenges in the care of the dying
P Donkor 105

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Care of the terminally ill patient: A pilot study
J Appiah-Poku 107

Comparison of chloroquine with quinimax in the treatment of cerebral malaria in Ghanaian children
Bamenla Q. Goka, Onike P. Rodrigues, G. Obeng Adjei, B. Quarshie, B.D. Akanmori, J.A.L. Kurtzhals, and Janet Neequaye 110

The detection of tuberculosis in paucibacillary sputum samples in Ghana using PCR
IK Wilson, D.G. Achel, M.D. Wilson, R. Boatin, O.K. Gyanfi, S. Aboagye and FA. Bonsu 117

Clinical audit of management of asthma in children at Korle Bu teaching hospital
Bamenla Q. Goka, I.F.A. Hesse, J.O. Oliver-Commey 122

Suppurative corneal ulcers in Ghana: Outcome of management

Prevalence of antibodies to human T-lymphotropic virus type I among blood donors in Accra, Ghana

A clinico-pathological study of uterine procidentia in Nigeria Igbos
W. I. B. Onuigbo 137

Vol 37 number 4 December 2003

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Getting back into Medline D. Ofori-Adjei 146

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Hearing loss among School Children in Ghana

Ear infections in patients with diabetes mellitus


Indirect causes of maternal mortality at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
A.HK. Collison, F.C. Peterson and P. Aniteye 161

Multiple resistant salmonella in Accra, Ghana
F.C. Mills-Robertson, Mercy J. Newman, Patience Mensah and Marian E Addy 165

CASE REPORTS
Paediatric phaeochromocytoma - A case report and literature review
Afua Hesse, Lorna Renner, C Onuoha and J. Boatey 170

Cervical prolapse during pregnancy
SA Obed and Michele Adu-Darko 173
EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
General problem of oral and maxillo-facial surgery in Ghana and its future
E.A. Nyako ........................................... 1

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

A study of 112 cases of tongue-tie at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital  P. Donkor  3

Ankylosis of the mandible: Analysis of 135 cases seen at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
A.E. Abdulai, Gladys Amponsah, H. Badoo and M.I. Iddrisu ................... 8

Still births at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital: Characteristics of parents, pregnancy and labour
E.K. Wiredu and Y. Tettey ...................................................... 15

Antenatal screening for syphilis in Accra: Is it useful? Is it worthwhile?
A. T. Lassey, N. Damale, Veronica Bekoe, Jennifer Welbeck, and CA. Klufi 20

What motivates community health volunteers in Mecanhelas district, Mozambique? Report from a qualitative study  AS Muula, J. Hoftnani and Margaret Cumberland 24

Serum immunoglobulins and circulating immune complexes in Nigerians on the Jos Plateau
K.B. Tauyigna, J.A. Onah and C.s.s. Bello 28

CASE REPORTS

Congenital sublingual dermoid cyst in a neonate  J.S.M. Daniels ....... 32

Multiple personality disorder: A myth or a reality? Case reports and literature review
A.O. Osei 36

ASSOCIATION NEWS

20th Triennial & Consultative Conference of the CMA/GMA 46th Annual General Conference 42

Vol 38 number 2 June 2004

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Making maternal death a notifiable event  Wendy Graham, S. Bhattacharya, D. Ofori-Adjei and Margaret Annar-Klemesu ........................................... 48

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Prevalence of undernutrition among elderly persons in Accra
F. Tavie. E. Adjetey-Sorsey, J. Armah, D. Busolo and E. Imaya 51

Paediatric deaths after injury at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana
FA Aabantanga, C.N. Mock and R.E. Quansah .... 56

Mortality among tuberculosis patients at the Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital: 1999-2001
E.II. Dodor ........ 62

ABO, Rhesus and Kell blood groups in the Akans of Ghana  J.K. Acquaye 68
Antibiotic susceptibility patterns of vibrio cholerae isolates in Ghana
Efficacy and acceptability of oral artemether (Artemos™) for the treatment of acute uncomplicated malaria in Ghana A.R. Oduro, S. Owusu-Agyei, T. Anyorigiya, M. Adjuiik and A. Hodgson 75

Vol 38 number 3 2004

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Mosquito coils - time to take a closer look? D. Ofori-Adjei 87

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Adverse effects of mosquito coil smoke on lung, liver and certain drug metabolising enzymes in male wistar albino rats LKN Okine, AK. Nyarko, C.E. Armah, B. Awumbila, K. Owusu, S. Setsoafia and M Ofosuhene 89
Benign fibro-osseous lesions of the facial skeleton: analysis of 52 cases seen at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital A.E. Abdulai, R.K. Gyasi and M. I. Iddrissu 96
The prevalence of benign oral ulceration among patients attending a Dental Clinic in Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital J.A. Amoateng and P. Donkor 101
Nasopharyngeal cancer: a review of cases at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. ED. Kitcher, J. Yamey, R.K. Gyasi and C Cheyuo 104
The characteristics, knowledge, beliefs and practices of parent/guardians of children with asthma in Accra, Ghana Bamenla Quarm-Goka, I.F.A. Hesse and J. O. Oliver-Commey 109
Vulvo-vaginal injuries: analysis of 170 cases at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana K. A. DOl/SO and CA. Turpin 116

CASE REPORT
Traumatic herniation of the buccal fat pad E Abdulai wid D. Avogo 120

Vol 38 number 4 December 2004

EDITORIAL
Moving the journal on D. Ofori-Adjei ………………………… 126

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Acute normovolaemic haemodilution for gynaecological surgery in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital: How feasible it is"? E. Aniteye, D. Kotei, Y. Adu-Gyamfī, S. Obed and F. Peterson 127
In vitro susceptibility of plasmodium falciparum isolates to chloroquine and other antimalarial drugs in Ghana N. B. Quashie. D. Ofori-Adjei, N. O. Duah and K Koram 131
Haemoglobin levels of well pre-school children in Bibiani, Ghana K.M. Nyarko, A.K Edusei, E.A. Addy, D. Ansong and A. Opoku-Agyeman 136
Use of midazolam for conscious sedation in upper gastrointestinal endoscopy

Use of midazolam for conscious sedation in upper gastrointestinal endoscopy

Use of midazolam for conscious sedation in upper gastrointestinal endoscopy
Volume 39(1); March 2005

Editorial
Special Journal Issue on Neglected Diseases
Professor David Ofori-Adjei 1.

Original Articles
Socio-demographic Characteristics of Substance Abusers Admitted to a Private Specialist Clinic
JJ Lamptey 2–7.

Review of Antenatal-Linked Voluntary Counseling and HIV Testing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons and Options for Ghana
F Baiden, Rita Baiden, J Williams, Patricia Akweongo, Christine Clerk, C Debpuur, J Philips, A Hodgson 8–13.

Hormone Receptor Expression in Male Breast Cancers
AB Akosa, S Van Norden, Y Tettey 14–18.

Alternate Eye Care Services in a Ghanaian District

Oral Pathologies Seen in Pregnant and Non-Pregnant Women
BDRT Annan, K Nuamah 24–27.

Case Reports
Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Mastoid - A Report of Two Cases
OA Lasisi, AO Ogunleye, EEU Akang 28–32.

Anaplastic Ependymoma of the Fourth Ventricle Causing Obstructive Hydrocephalus
MI Iddrissu, TK Dakurah, GK Wepeba 33–36.

Intestinal Obstruction Caused by Retained Surgical Sponge: Two Case Reports

Volume 39(2); June 2005

Editorial Commentary
Food Safety: Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. Luke 12: 19b

Original Articles
D Agbodaze, PNA Nmai, FC Robertson, D Yeboah-Manu, K Owusu-Darko, KK Addo 46–49.

Pregnant Women's Knowledge of and Attitudes to HIV Testing at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi
VN Addo 50–54.

Prevalence of Blindness in People Over 40 Years in the Volta Region of Ghana

An Audit of Aspects of Informed Consent and Pain Relief in General Surgical Units of Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

Case Report
Van Der Woude Syndrome: Report of a Case
Merley A Newman, NO Nartey, EA Nyako 68–70.

Volume 39(3); September 2005

Editorial Commentaries
A New Impetus is Required for Neglected Infectious Disease
Lester Chitsulo 80.

Editorial Consultants at The Lancet
Richard Horton 81.

Original Articles
The Epidemiology of Obesity in Ghana
RB Biritwum, J Gyapong, G Mensah 82–85.

Findings from a Buruli Ulcer Mouse Model Study
P Addo, E Owusu, B Adu-Addai, M Quartey, M Abbas, A Dodoo, D Ofori-Adjei 86–93.

A Review of Leishmaniasis in West Africa
DA Boakye, MD Wilson, M Kweku 94–97.

Obesity - A Preventable Disease

Determinants of Anaemia in Pregnancy in Sekyere West District, Ghana

Case Report
Hypoglycaemia in an Infant of a Mother with Fasting Hyperglycaemia - A Case Report
Larysa Aleksenko, RK Gyasi 108–111.

Volume 39(4); December 2005
Some Health Challenges for the Coming Year
Professor David Ofori-Adjei 121.

**Original Articles**
Cardiomegaly in Ghana: An Autopsy Study

Tetracycline Pleurodesis for Malignant Pleural Effusion-A Review of 38 Cases

Sero-Prevalence of Hepatitis B and C Viruses in Cirrhosis of the Liver in Accra, Ghana
A Blankson, EK Wiredu, RK Gyasi, A Adjei, Y Tettey 132–137.

Screening of Adolescents for Eye Diseases in Nigerian High Schools
BO Adegbehingbe, MK Oladehinde, TO Majemgbasan, HO Onakpoya, EO Osagiede 138–142.

**Letter to the Editor**
Ghana Golden Jubilee topics in medicine: Final call for topics!
F I D KONOTEY-AHULU 143.

**Case Report**
Pyoderma Gangrenosum and Inflammatory Bowel Disease- Case Reports
KN Nkrumah, HA Addo, K Tachi 144–146.

**Volume 40(1): March 2006**

**Editorial Commentary**
Ectopic Pregnancy in Ghana-Time for Change
Dr. K Nkyekyer 1–2.

**Original Articles**
Diagnosis of Unruptured Ectopic Pregnancy is Still Uncommon in Ghana
SA Obed 3–7.

Birth Weight and Ponderal Index in Pre-Eclampsia: A Comparative Study
SA Obed, Aniteye Patience 8–13.

A Review of Vacuum Deliveries at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi
BK Opoku 14–17.

Cranioplasty Using Polymethyl Methacrylate Implant Constructed from an Alginate Impression and Wax Elimination Technique
AE Abdulai, MI Iddrissu, TK Dakurah 18–21.

Oral Hygiene and Nutritional Status of Children Aged 1–7 Years in a Rural Community

The Role of Community-Based Surveillance in Health Outcomes Measurement
Anal Pain Secondary to Swallowed Bone
H K Aduful 31–32.

Volume 40(2); June 2006

Editorial Commentary
Ghana Medical Journal @ www.ghanamedassn.org
Professor David Ofori-Adjei 38.

Original Articles
Outcome of Trabeculectomies Without Adjunctive Antimetabolites
ME Gyasi, WMK Amoaku, OA Debrah, EA Awini, P Abugri 39–44.

Laryngeal Cancer at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital Accra Ghana
ED Kitcher, J Yarney, RK Gyasi, C Cheyuo 45–49.

Acute Intestinal Obstruction in Adults in Kumasi, Ghana
M Ohene-Yeboah, E Adippah, K Gyasi-Sarpong 50–54.

The Prevalence OF Diastolic Dysfunction in Adult Hypertensive Nigerians
SO Ike, VO Ikeh 55–60.

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Universal Basic Precautions by Medical Personnel in a Teaching Hospital

Case Reports
Necrotising Fasciitis of the Submandibular Region
EA Nyako, NO Nartey 65–68.

Disseminated Invasive Aspergillosis
A Aleksenko, RK Gyasi

Volume 40(3); September 2006

Editorial Commentary
Promoting and Monitoring Safe Motherhood in Ghana
Professor RB Biritwum 78–79.

Original Articles
Overview of the Law and Availability of Abortion Services in Ghana
RAS Morhee, ESK Morhee 80–86.

Trends in the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation and its Effect on Delivery Outcomes in the Kassena-Nankana District of Northern Ghana
AR Oduro, P Ansah, A Hodgson, TM Afful, F Baiden, P Adongo, KA Koram 87–92.

Singleton Preterm Births in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana - Origins and Outcomes
Seroprevalence of Cytomegalovirus Among Some Voluntary Blood Donors at the 37 Military Hospital, Accra, Ghana

Case Reports
Intrauterine Retained Fetal Bones as a Cause of Secondary Infertility
EK Srofenyoh, M Addison, B Dortey, PA Kuffour 105–109.

Coinfection of Cutaneous Leishmaniasis and HIV Infection
Margaret Lartey, L Adusei, L Hanson-Nortey, JH Addy 110–112.

Volume 40(4); December 2006

Editorial Commentary
Oral Health Manpower - What are Ghana's requirements?
Professor Peter Donkor 116–117.

Original Articles
Options for Types of Dental Health Personnel to Train for Ghana
ME Addo, P Batchelor, A Sheiham 118–126.

The Use of Free Autogenous Rib Grafts in Maxillofacial Reconstruction

Human Pulmonary Infections with Bovine and Environment (Atypical) Mycobacteria in Jos, Nigeria
JD Mawak, NE Gomwalk, CSS Bello, YT Kandakai-Olukemi 132–136.

Surveillance of Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers in Ghana: Entomological Assessment of the Risk of Transmission in the Northern Regions
M Appawu, S Dadzie, H Abdul, H Asmah, D Boakye, M Wilson, D Ofori-Adjei 137–141.

Ten Years of Preoperative Autologous Blood Donation in Accra
Justina K Ansah, JK Acquaye 142–147.

Case Reports
Classical Cornelia de Lange Syndrome
EV Badoe 148–150.

Concurrent Malakoplakia of Cervical Lymph Nodes and Prostatic Adenocarcinoma with Bony Metastasis: Case Report

GMA News

Fellowship Awards Presented at the 2006 Annual General Conference at Ho 157–158.
Editorial Commentaries
Saying Thank You
Professor David Ofori-Adjei 1.

Reviewers for 2006 2.

Original Articles
Distribution of Serogroups and Serotypes of Multiple Drug Resistant Shigella Isolates

Emergency Ear, Nose and Throat Admissions at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital
ED Kitcher, A Jangu, K Baidoo 9–11.

Upper Gastrointestinal Endoscopy at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana

Deep Venous Thrombosis of the Lower Limb in Young Ambulant Ghanaians

Low Back Pain in Underground Gold Miners in Ghana
FY Bio, S Sadhra, C Jackson, PS Burge 21–25.

Asymptomatic Bacteriuria in Pregnant Women Attending Antenatal Clinic at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana
CA Turpin, Bridget Minkah, KA Danso, EH Frimpong 26–29.

Case Reports
Extensive Groin and Perineal Hidradenitis Suppurativa Complicated by High Fistula in Ano
HK Aduful, A Paintsil 30–32.

Life-Threatening Oro-Facial Infections
EK Amponsah, P Donkor 33–36.

Volume 41(2); June 2007

Editorial Commentary
Safety of “Sachet Water” and Raw Milk
Professor David Ofori-Adjei 37.

Original Articles
Respiratory Symptoms and Lung Function Impairment in Underground Gold Miners in Ghana
FY Bio, S Sadhra, C Jackson, PS Burge 38–47.

Prophylactic Antibiotic during Caesarean Sections at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi
BK Opoku 48–51.

Mycobacterial Species Causing Pulmonary Tuberculosis at the Korle Bu Teaching
Bacterial Contaminations of Informally Marketed Raw Milk in Ghana
ES Donkor, KG Aning, J Quaye 58–61.

Sachet Drinking Water in Accra: The Potential Threats of Transmission of Enteric Pathogenic Protozoan Organisms

Contribution of Refractive Errors to Visual Impairment in Patients at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital
CT Ntim-Amponsah 68–71.

A Study of Breast Cancer in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital: Assessing the Impact of Health Education
JNA Clegg-Lamptey, WM Hodasi 72–77.

Case Reports
Surgically Correctable Adrenal-Dependent Hypertension: A Report of Five Cases

Osteomyelitis of the Frontal Bone
Christina Osei-Yeboah, Janet Neequaye, H Bulley, Afua Darkwa 88–90.

GMJ News
Guidelines for Contributors 91–93.

Volume 41(3); September 2007

Editorial Commentaries
Ghana's Free Delivery Care Policy
Professor David Ofori-Adjei 94–95.

Delivery Care Policy: Service Delivery and Quality of Care
Dr Andrew Arkutu 96–97.

Delivery Care Policy: Social Dimensions
Dr Charlotte Gardiner 98–99.

Original Articles
Suzanne Penfold, E Harrison, Jacqueline Bell, Ann Fitzmaurice 100–109.
Effect of Delivery Care User Fee Exemption Policy on Institutional Maternal Deaths in the Central and Volta Regions of Ghana  
WK Bosu, Jacqueline S Bell, Margaret Armar-klemesu, Janet Ansong Tornui  
118–124.

Hospital Based Maternity Care in Ghana - Findings of a Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths  
Janet Ansong-Tornui, Margaret Armar-Klemesu, Daniel Arhinful, Suzanne Penfold, Julia Hussein  
125–132.

Peripartum Hysterectomies at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital: A Review of 182 Consecutive Cases  
RA Kwame-Aryee, AK Kwakye, JD Seffah  
133–138.

Pregnancy Following Eclampsia: A Longitudinal Study at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital  
SA Obed, Patience Aniteye  
139–143.

Correspondence and Correction  
Diagnostic role of upper gastrointestinal endoscopy in patients with inflammatory bowel disease  
C Zavos, J Kountouras, P Katsinelos, N Zavos, E Matrella  
144–145.

Includes additional comments & authors

Association News  
GMA@50: Ghana's Health  
Sodzi Sodzi-Tettey  
146–150.

Obituary  
A Tribute to Professor Silas R. A. Dodu  
Professor Silas Dodu  
151–153.

Correspondence and Correction  
Obesity - A preventable disease by F. Ofei  

Volume 41(4); December 2007

Commentary  
Ghana's neglected chronic disease epidemic: a developmental challenge  
Ama de-Graft Aikins  
154–159.

Original Articles  
Population Based Reference Intervals for Common Blood Haematological and Biochemical Parameters in the Akuapem North District  
KA Koram, MM Addae, JC Ocran, S Adu-Amankwah, WO Rogers, FK Nkrumah  
160–166.

Barriers to Cataract Surgical Uptake in the Upper East Region of Ghana  
ME Gyasi, WMK Amoaku, DK Asamany  
167–170.
A Review of Trabeculectomies at a Nigerian Teaching Hospital
BO Adegbehingbe, T Majemgbasan 176–180.

Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting in Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
Gladys Ampomah 181–185.

Peripheral Vascular Injuries and Their Management in Accra
HK Adful, WM Hodasi 186–189.

Surgical Management of Constrictive Pericarditis

Special Article
Microfinance: An Alternative Means of Healthcare Financing for the Poor

Volume 42(1); March 2008

Commentary
Commentary

Original Articles
Self-Reported Absenteeism Among Hospital Workers in Benin City, Nigeria
E C Isah, V E Omorogbe, O Orji, L Oyovwe

Acceptance of Voluntary Counselling, Testing and Treatment for HIV Among Pregnant Women in Kumasi, Ghana
CN Holmes, PO Preko, R Bolds, J Baidoo, PE Jolly

Virological Characterization of Dual HIV-1/HIV-2 Seropositivity and Infections in Southern Ghana
KWC Sagoe, JAA Mingle, RK Affram, S Britton, A Dzokoto, A Sonnerborg

Evaluation of Nutritional Status of New Tuberculosis Patients at the Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital
EA Dodor

Synchronised Cardioversion for Chronic Atrial Fibrillation
E Aniteye, D Kotei, M Tettey, L Sereboe, F Edwin, A Doku, M Tamatey, K Entsuah-Mensah, S Batista, K Frimpong-Boateng

Endoscopic Evaluation of the Colorectum in Patients Presenting with Haematochezia at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital Accra
JCB Dakubo, R Kumoji, SB Naaeder, JN Clegg-Lamptey

Case Reports
Inflammatory Bowel Disease at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra
KN Nkrumah
Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome of the Finnish Type
Volume 42(2); June 2008

Commentary
The Efficacy of Amodiaquine plus Artesunate Combination in Ghana
Collins Ahorlu

Original Articles
Efficacy of Amodiaquine/Artesunate Combination Therapy for Uncomplicated Malaria in Children Under Five Years in Ghana
KA Koram, L Quaye, B Abuaku

Control Perceptions and Control Appraisal: Relation to Measures of Subjective Well-Being
Frances E Owusu-Ansah

Emergency Contraception: Knowledge and Perception of Female Undergraduates in the Niger Delta of Nigeria
CI Akani, CE Enyindah, S Babatunde

Cervical Human Papillomavirus Infection in Accra, Ghana
AB Domfeh, EK Wiredu, AA Adjei, PFK Ayeh-Kumi, TK Adiku, Y Tettey, RK Gyasi, HB Armah

Analgesic Activity of Crude Aqueous Extract of the Root Bark of Zanthoxylum Xanthoxyloides
ABA Prempeh, J Mensah-Attipoe

In Vivo Inhibition of Prostaglandin E2 Production by Crude Aqueous Extract of the Root Bark of Zanthoxylum Xanthoxyloides
ABA Prempeh, J Mensah-Attipoe

Special Article
Social Pathology of Cleft Palate in the African: Mathematical Precision of Pitch Gaps in Tribal Tonal Linguistics
Felix ID Konotey-Ahulu

Case Report
Rudimentary Horn Pregnancy: Pre-Rupture Diagnosis and Management
KA Buntugu, MY Ntumy, EO Ameh, SA Obed

Volume 42(3); September 2008

Commentary
Investing in Health Research for Endemic Diseases
Professor David Ofori-Adjei

Original Articles
Factors Associated with Sexually Transmitted Infections Among Young Ghanaian Women
Malnutrition: Missed Opportunities for Diagnosis
S Antwi

Influence of Head Flexion After Endotracheal Intubation on Intraocular Pressure and Cardio-Respiratory Response in Patients Undergoing Cataract Surgery
M Safavi, A Honarmand

Spectrum of Complaints Presented at a Specialist Breast Clinic in Kumasi, Ghana
M Ohene-Yeboah, EP Amaning

Outcome of Barium Enema in Patients with Colorectal Symptoms
YB Mensah, JCB Dakubo, S Asiamah, SB Naaeder

Crude Aqueous Extract of the Root Bark of *Zanthoxylum Xanthoxyloides* Inhibits White Blood Cells Migration in Acute Inflammation
ABA Prempeh, J Mensah-Attipoe

**Special Article**
Porcine Anaesthesia for Advanced Trauma Operative Management (Atom)
H Baddoo, F Ahiaku, E Fordjuor, I Wulff, D Akuoku, D Kwami

**Case Report**
Hypokalaemic Paralysis Revealing Sjogren's Syndrome in a 16-Year Old Girl
S Skalova, L Minxova, R Slezak

**Association News**
Obituary: Professor J O M Pobee: The Indefatigable Physician
Ghana Medical Association

**Volume 42(4); December 2008**

**Commentary**
Bilateral Ureteric Ligation
Professor R Kwame Affram

**Original Articles**
Delayed Recognition of Bilateral Ureteral Injury after Gynecological Surgery
JE Mensah, GO Klufio, F Ahiaku, C Osafo, S Gepi-Attee

Awareness and Perceptions of and Attitudes towards Caesarean Delivery among Antenatal
RK Adageba, KA Danso, A Adusu-Donkor, F Ankobea-Kokro

HIV Seroprevalence in Patients with Carcinoma of the Cervix in Ibadan, Nigeria
AA Abdus-Salam, OB Ogunnorin, RA Abdus-Salam

Health Professionals Expose TB Patients to Stigmatization in Society: Insights from Communities in an Urban District in Ghana
EA Dodor

What are the Technical and Allocative Efficiencies of Public Health Centres in Ghana?
J Akazili, M Adjuik, S Chatio, E Kanyomse, A Hodgson, M Aikins, J Gyapong
Don't Lie but Don't Tell the Whole Truth: The Therapeutic Privilege - Is it Ever Justified? 
AK Edwin

**Case Reports**
Failed Fibreoptic Intubation in a Patient with a Large Mandibular Fibroosseous Lesion
HK Baddoo, GE Parkins

Totemism and the Transmission of Human Pentastomiasis
JCB Dakubo, SB Naaeder, R Kumodji

**Association News**
Speech Delivered by Dr. Emmanuel Adom Winful at the 50th Annual General Conference of the Ghana Medical Association held in Accra on November 3–9, 2008
Special Jubilee Awards

**Volume 43(1); March 2009**

**Commentary**
Evidence-Based Approach to Decision Making: The Inclusion of GIS as Part of Ghana's Health Information Systems
D de Souza

**Original Articles**
Cardiovascular Response during Induction of Anesthesia and Tracheal Intubation with Thiopental added to Fentanyl, Ketamine, and Fentanyl-Ketamine
A Honarmand, M Safavi

Pregnancy-Associated Malaria in a Rural Community of Ghana
MF Ofori, E Ansah, I Agyepong, D Ofori-Adjei, L Hviid, BD Akanmori

Outcome of Thrombolysis for Massive Pulmonary Embolism
E Aniteye, M Tettey, L Sereboe, F Edwin, D Kotei, A Doku, M Tamatey, K Enstuah-Mensah, I Delia, K Frimpong-Boateng

A Preliminary Report on the Use of Peripheral Nerve Blocks for Lower Limb Amputations
HK Baddoo

Preference of Ghanaian Women for Vaginal or Caesarean Delivery Postpartum
KA Danso, HM Schwandt, CA Turpin, JD Seffah, A Samba, MJ Hindin

**Special Article**
Non-Disclosure of Medical Errors an Egregious Violation of Ethical Principles
AK Edwin

**Case Reports**
Adult Sacrococcygeal Teratoma: A Case Report
OO Afuwape, OO Ogundoyin, DI Ogunlana, AO Adeleye

An Intra-Abdominal Gossypiboma
J Dakubo, JN Clegg-Lamptey, WM Hodasi, HE Obaka, H Toboh, W Asempa
Volume 43(2); June 2009

Editorial Commentary
Towards Controlling Trachoma in Ghana
Dr. Michael Ekuoba-Gyasi

Original Articles
Prevalence of Active Trachoma Two Years after Control Activities
M Hagan, D Yayemain, F Ahorsu, A Aboe

Evaluation of Oral and Extra-Oral Factors Predisposing to Delusional Halitosis
O Akpata, O F Omoregie, K Akhigbe, E E Ehikhamenor

Perceived Quality of Healthcare Delivery in a Rural District of Ghana
P K Turkson

Predictors of Post Operative Bleeding and Blood Transfusion in Cardiac Surgery
M Tettey, E Aniteye, L Sereboe, F Edwin, D Kotei, M Tamatey, K Entsuamensah, V Amuzu, K Frimpong-Boateng

Inhibition of Vascular Response in Inflammation by Crude Aqueous Extract of the Root Bark of *Zanthoxylum Xanthoxyloides*
ABA Prempeh, J Mensah-Attipoe

Special Article
Child Health: Past, Present and Future Challenges
Yaw Asirifi

Case Reports
Impalement Injuries of the Chest
F Edwin, M Tettey, L Sereboe, E Aniteye, D Kotei, M Tamatey, K Entsuamensah, I Delia, K Frimpong-Boateng

Melanotic Neuroectodermal Tumour of Infancy (Progonoma) Treated by Radical Maxillary Surgery
L A Renner, A E Abdulai

Correspondence
Cardiomegaly in Ghana: An Autopsy Study
Okechukwu Samuel Ogah

Association News
Beyond Mistrust: Tweaking the Doctor-Employer Relationship
Sodzi Sodzi-Tettey

Volume 43(3); September 2009

Editorial Commentary
Perceptions, Attitudes and Acceptance of Aretemisinin Combination Therapy for the Treatment of Uncomplicated Malaria in Ghana
Parents' Perceptions, Attitudes and Acceptability of Treatment of Childhood Malaria with Artemisinin Combination Therapies in Ghana
G O Adjei, A K Darkwah, B Q Goka, C Bart-Plange, M L Alifrangis, J A L Kurtzhals, O P Rodrigues

Sero-Epidemiology of Toxoplasmosis Amongst Pregnant Women in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana
I Ayi, S AA Edu, K A Apea-Kubi, D Boamah, K M Bosompem, D Edoh

Factors Associated With the Knowledge, Practice and Perceptions of Contraception in Rural Southern Nigeria
L O Omo-Aghoja, V W Omo-Aghoja, C O Aghoja, F E Okonofua, O Aghedo, C Umueri, R Otayohwo, P Feyi-Waboso, E A Onowhakpor, K A Inikori

Causes and Incidence of Destructive Eye Procedures in North-Eastern Ghana
M E Gyasi, W M Amoaku, M Adjuik

Why Do Breast Cancer Patients Report Late or Abscond During Treatment in Ghana? A Pilot Study
J Clegg-Lamptey, J Dakubo, Y N Attobra

Effect of Sildenafil on Erectile Dysfunction in Spinal Cord Injured Patients
B K Manou, P N van Tam, MB Sesay, PA Joseph, D A Alloh, J Bombo, J Kouakou, B M Nandjui

Amodiaquine-Associated Adverse Effects After Inadvertent Overdose and After a Standard Therapeutic Dose
G O Adjei, B Q Goka, O P Rodrigues, L C G Hoegberg, M Alifrangis, JAL Kurtzhals

Adenomatous Polyposis Coli in an Elderly Female Nigerian
O B Alese, D O Irabor

Volume 43(4); December 2009

Editorial Commentary
Current Status of HIV/AIDS Treatment, Care and Support Services in Ghana
Dr William K Ampofo

Original Articles
Care of Patients on Anti-Retroviral Therapy in Kumasi Metropolis
S Ohene, E Forson

Confocal Scanning Laser Tomography of the Optic Nerve Head of Glaucoma Patients: Inter-Correlation of Disc Parameters

Plasma Homocysteine as a Risk Factor for Strokes in Ghanaian Adults
AK Akpalu, PK Nyame

Effects of the Intake of Natural Cocoa Powder on Some Biochemical and Haematological Indices in the Rat
Evaluation of Cataract Surgery Outcome in Western Nigeria
M A Isawumi, EO Soetan, AO Adeoye, C O Adeoti

Special Article
Clinical Genetics: Ghanaian Gratitude for British and Hungarian Contributions: A Personalized Historical Perspective
Felix I D Konotey-Ahulu

Case Reports
An Unusual Fracture of the Mandible
A L Ladeinde, WL Adeyemo, MO Ogunlewe, OM Gbotolorun

Broad Ligament Haematoma Following a Snake Bite
V Addo, F A Kokroe, R L Reindorf

Volume 44(1); March 2010
Editorial Commentaries
The Clinical Efficacy of Cryptolepis Sanguinolenta in the Treatment of Malaria
Michael S Tempesta

Treatment of Falciparum Malaria with a Tea-Bag Formulation of Cryptolepis Sanguinolenta Root
Nii-Ayi Ankrah

Original Articles
Clinical Efficacy of a Tea-Bag Formulation of Cryptolepis Sanguinolenta Root in the Treatment of Acute Uncomplicated Falciparum Malaria
K A Bugyei, G L Boye, M E Addy

Presentation of Retinoblastoma at a Paediatric Eye Clinic in Ghana
V Essuman, C T Ntim-Amponsah, S Akafo, L Renner, L Edusei

Airway and Respiratory Complications in Children Undergoing Cleft Lip and Palate Repair
I Desalu, WL Adeyemo, MO Akintimoye, AA Adepoju

Prevalence of Genital Chlamydia and Gonococcal Infections in at Risk Women in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana
B K Opoku, YA Sarkodie

Presentation Patterns of Primary Open Angle Glaucomas in North Eastern Ghana
M Gyasi, W Amoako, M Adjuiik

Special Article
Diagnosis of Tuberculosis in Ghana: The Role of Laboratory Training
K K Addo, D Yeboah-Manu, M Dan-Dzide, K Owusu-Darko, P Caulley, G I Mensah, M Minamikawa, C Lienhardt, F A Bonsu, D Ofori-Adjei

Case Reports
Special Position for the Anaesthetic Management of a Patient with Giant Neck and Back Masses
Volume 44(2); June 2010

Editorial Commentary
Time to Develop Capacity to Diagnose Drug Resistant Tuberculosis
Frank Bonsu

Original Articles
High Frequency of First-Line Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance among Persons with Chronic Pulmonary Tuberculosis at a Teaching Hospital Chest Clinic
A Forson, S Kudzawu, A Kwara, T Flanigan

Reasons Given by Pregnant Women for Late Initiation of Antenatal Care in the Niger Delta, Nigeria
E P Ndidi, I G Oseremen

Resistance-Mediating Polymorphisms of Plasmodium Falciparum Among Isolates From Children With Severe Malaria in Kumasi, Ghana
HH Abruquah, FY Bio, SCK Tay, BWL Lawson

Clinic Visits and Cervical Cancer Screening in Accra
R M K Adanu, J D Seffah, R Duda, R Darko, A Hill, John Anarfi

Body Mass Index, Weight Gain during Pregnancy and Obstetric Outcomes
V N Addo

Special Article
Is Routine Human Papillomavirus Vaccination an Option for Ghana?
A K Edwin

Case Reports
Congenital Malaria in Newborn Twins
D A Opare

Non-Puerperal Uterine Inversion: A Case Report
C O Fofie, P Baffoe

Volume 44(3); September 2010

Editorial Commentary
Cost of Health Care Delivery in Ghana
George Amofah

Original Articles
Estimating the Cost of Healthcare Delivery in Three Hospitals in Southern Ghana
A Q Q Aboagye, A N K Degboe, A A D Obuobi

Case Control Study to Determine the Factors Associated with Leprosy in the Sene District, Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana
A Two-Year Review of Uterine Rupture in a Regional Hospital
CO Fofie, P Baffoe

Penetrating Abdominal Injuries in Adults Seen at Two Teaching Hospitals in Ghana
M Ohene-Yeboah, J C B Dakubo, F Boakye, S B Naeeder

Permanent Complete Heart Block Following Surgical Correction of Congenital Heart Disease
F Edwin, E Aniteye, M Tettey, L Sereboe, D Kotei, M Tamatey, K Entsua-Mensah, K Frimpong-Boateng

Special Article
The Zoonotic Implications of Pentastomiasis in the Royal Python (Python Regius)
AB Ayinmode, AO Adedokun, A Aina, V Taiwo

Case Reports
Early Surgical Repair of Penile Fractures
J E Mensah, B Morton, M Kyei

A Case Report of Intracranial Vertebral-Basilar Artery Hypoplasia Presenting with Episodic Dizziness
Jiann Jy Chen, Dem Lion Chen

Book Review
“With Heart and Voice” (Fred Sai Remembers) by Fred T. Sai
Dr Andrew A Arkutu

Volume 44(4); December 2010
Commentary
Financial Viability of District Mutual Health Insurance
Dr Anthony Q Q Aboagye

Original Articles
Financial Viability of District Mutual Health Insurance Schemes of Lawra and Sissala East Districts, Upper West Region, Ghana
S K Yevutsey, M Aikins

Air Pollution and Hospitalization for Respiratory Diseases Among Children in Isfahan, Iran
M Mansourian, S H Javanmard, P Poursafa, R Kelishadi

Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy and Employment Status in Accra, Ghana
IW Howley, M Larrey, J T Machan, E A Talbot, A Obo-Akwa, T P Flanigan, A Kwara

Functional Disability and Associated Chronic Conditions among Geriatric Populations in a Rural Community of India
D Chakrabarty, P K Mandal, N Manna, S Mallik, P Ghosh, C Chatterjee, J C Sardar, M Sau, A K Sinha Roy

Mandibular Fractures Associated with Domestic Violence in Calabar, Nigeria
C E Anyanechi
Case Reports
Peritoneal Hydatidosis in a Young Girl
I Wani, A M Lone, I Hussain, A Malik, M Thoker, K A Wani

Recurrent Nasal Polyp and Pansinus Mucopyocele Associated with Bilateral Blindness: A Case Report
J A Fasunla, A O Adeleye, P A Onakoya, C A Okolo, G O Nwaorgu

Volume 45(1); March 2011

Commentaries
Buruli Ulcer Disease David Ofori-Adjei

Reviewers for 2010

Original Articles
Surgical Management of Buruli Ulcer Disease: A Four-Year Experience from Four Endemic Districts in Ghana
EJK Adu, E Ampadu, D Acheampong

Acceptability of Routine Offer of HIV Testing (Opt-Out Approach) among Pregnant Women in the Wa Municipality
J Nyuzaghl, S Ohene, K Odoi-Agyarko

A Survey of Female Genital Schistosomiasis of the Lower Reproductive Tract in the Volta Basin of Ghana
D Yirenya-Tawiah, C Amoah, K A Apea-Kubi, M Dade, M Ackumey, T Annang, D Y Mensah, K M Bosompem

Potential Sources of Transmission of Hospital Acquired Infections in the Volta Regional Hospital in Ghana
D N A Tagoe, SE Baidoo, I Dadzie, D Tengey, C Agede

Presbyopia among Public Senior High School Teachers in the Kumasi Metropolis
D B Kumah, S Y Lartey, K Amoah-Duah

Special Article
In the Case of Transmission of Mycobacterium Ulcerans in Buruli Ulcer Disease Acanthamoeba Species Stand Accused
MD Wilson, DA Boakye, L Mosi, K Asiedu

Case Reports
Treatment of Ameloblastoma of the Jaws in Children
A E Abdulai

Kawasaki Disease in Ghana: Case Reports From Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
E V Badoe, J Neequaye, J O Oliver-Commey, J Amoah, A Osafo, I Aryee, M Y Nyarko
Commentary
Pharmacogenetics in Ghana
Jairo A Garcia A, Lewis R Roberts

Original Articles
Review of Orbital Exenterations in Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital
E Ackuaku-Dogbe

Ocular Leprosy in Institutionalized Nigerian Patients
J A Ebeigbe, F Kio

HIV-AIDS Related Maternal Mortality in Benin City, Nigeria
JU Onakewhor, BN Olagbuiji, A B Ande, MC Ezeanochie, OE Olokor, F E Okonofua

Diabetic Foot Care: Self Reported Knowledge and Practice Among Patients Attending Three Tertiary Hospital in Nigeria
O O Desalu, F K Salawu, A K Jimoh, A O Adekoya, O A Busari, A B Olokoba

Management of Contractures: A Five-Year Experience at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi
E J K Adu

Special Article
Pharmacogenetics in Ghana: Reviewing the Evidence
W Kudzi, G O Adjei, D Ofori-Adjei, A N O Dodoo

Article PubReader PDF–224K
Case Reports
Term Abdominal Pregnancy with Healthy Newborn: A Case Report
P Baffoe, C Fofie, B N Gandau

Cuff Inflation to Aid Nasotracheal Intubation Using the C-MAC Videolaryngoscope
HK Baddoo, B J Phillips

Volume 45(3); September 2011

Editorial Commentary
Ethics and Electronic Health Information Technology
Ama Kyerewaa Edwin

Original Articles
Effect of Safety Education on Knowledge of and Compliance with Road Safety Signs among Commercial Motorcyclists in Uyo, Southern Nigeria
O E Johnson, AM Adebayo

Hepatitis B and C Viral Infections among Blood Donors from Rural Ghana
B Nkrumah, M Owusu, H O Frempong, P Averu

Vasectomy: A Survey of Attitudes, Counseling Patterns and Acceptance among Nigerian Resident Gynaecologists
P N Ebeigbe, G O Igberase, J Eigbefoh
Mandibular Sites Prone to Fracture: Analysis of 174 Cases in a Nigerian Tertiary Hospital
C E Anyanechi, B D Saheeb

Ethics and Electronic Health Information Technology: Challenges for Evidence-Based Medicine and the Physician-Patient Relationship
I. D. Norman, M. K. Aikins, F. N. Binka

Case Reports
Vulvar Lipoma: Is It So Rare?
A T Odoi, A Owusu-Bempah, E T Dassah, D E Darkey, S E Quayson

Ultrasound Guided Hydrostatic Reduction of Intussusception in Children at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital: An Initial Experience
Y Mensah, H Glover-Addy, V Etwire, W Appeau-Mensah, M Twum

Correction
Correction

Volume 45(4); December 2011

Commentary
Economic Burden of Motorcycle Accidents in Northern Ghana
George D Oduro

Original Articles
Economic Burden of Motorcycle Accidents in Northern Ghana
M Kudebong, F Wurapa, J Nonvignon, I Norman, J K Awoonor-Williams, M Aikins

Antiplasmodial Activity of Extracts of Tridax Procumbens and Phyllanthus Amarus in in Vitro Plasmodium Falciparum Culture Systems
R Appiah-Opong, AK Nyarko, D Dodoo, FN Gyang, KA Koram, NK Ayisi

Analysis of Lung Function Tests at a Teaching Hospital
DA Antwi, G E Gbekle, H K Cosmos, IE Ennin, EA Amedonu, C Antwi-Boasiako, MK Clottey, FK Adzaku

Renal Status of Children With Sickle Cell Disease in Accra, Ghana
C T Osei-Yeboah, O Rodrigues

The Metabolic Syndrome Among Patients With Cardiovascular Disease in Accra, Ghana
J Akpalu, A Akpalu, F Ofei

Special Article
The Medico-Legal Prerequisite for Initiating Quarantine and Isolation Practices in Public Health Emergency Management in Hospitals in Ghana
I D Norman, M Aikins, F N Binka

Case Reports
Huge Abdominal Mass Secondary to a Transverse Vaginal Septum and Cervical Dysgenesis
Retrocaval Ureter: Two Case Reports
M Y Kyei, E D Yeboah, G O Klufio, J E Mensah, S Gepi-Atee, L Zakpaa, B Morton, B Adusei

**Volume 46(1); March 2012**
Commentary
The Ghana Medical Journal in Medline

Original Articles
Menstrual Characteristics in Some Adolescent Girls in Accra, Ghana
S K Gumanga, R A Kwame-Aryee

Breast Cancer in Kumasi, Ghana
M Ohene-Yeboah, E Adjei

Lipid Disorders in Hospital Attendants in Kumasi, Ghana
F B Micah, B C Nkum

Evaluating the Medical Care of Child Sexual Abuse Victims in a General Hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria
OK Ige, O I Fawole

Sexual Risk Behaviour Among HIV-Positive Persons in Kumasi, Ghana
NM Ncube, J Akunna, F Babatunde, A Nyarko, N J Yatch, W Ellis, A Turpin, P E Jolly

Special Article
Hospital All-Risk Emergency Preparedness in Ghana
I D Norman, M Aikins, FN Binka, KM Nyarko

Case Reports
Recurrent Respiratory Papillomatosis: The Korle-Bu Experience
K K Baidoo, ED Kitcher

Central Retinal Artery Occlusion Following Peribulbar Anesthesia for Pterygium Excision
M E Gyasi, R A Kodjo, W M Amoaku

**Volume 46(2 Suppl); June 2012**

Commentary
Ghana's Burden of Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases: Future Directions in Research, Practice and Policy
A de-Graft Aikins, J Addo, F Ofei, WK Bosu, C Agyemang

Original Articles
A Review of Population-Based Studies on Hypertension in Ghana
J Addo, C Agyemang, L Smeeh, A de-Graft Aikins, A K Edusei, O Ogedegbe

Stroke in Ashanti Region of Ghana
C Agyemang, G Attah-Adjepong, E Owusu-Dabo, A De-Graft Aikins, J Addo, A K Edusei, B C Nkum, G Ogedegbe
A Review of Epidemiological Studies of Asthma in Ghana
A S Amoah, A G Forson, D A Boakye

Mental Health Research in Ghana: A Literature Review
U M Read, V CK Doku

Structural Barriers to Coping with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus in Ghana: Experiences of Diabetic Youth and Their Families
J Kratzer

When Darkness Falls at Mid-Day: Young Patients' Perceptions and Meanings of Chronic Illness and Their Implications for Medical Care
D Atobrah

Household Burden of Chronic Diseases in Ghana
H A Tagoe

Lay Representations of Chronic Diseases in Ghana: Implications for Primary Prevention
A de Graft Aikins, A Anum, C Agyemang, J Addo, O Ogedegbe

A Comprehensive Review of the Policy and Programmatic Response to Chronic Non-Communicable Disease in Ghana
W K Bosu

June 2012, Vol. 46 No. 2

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
The Health of Adult Women in Accra
R. Darko and A.G. Hill •

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
R. Darko, R. M. Adanu, R. B. Duda, N. Douptcheva and A. G. Hill •

Sexual and Reproductive Health in Accra, Ghana
R. M. Adanu, J. Seffah, J. K. Anarfi, N. Lince and K. Blanchard •

Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity and Perception of Healthy and Desirable Body Size in Urban, Ghanaian Women
R. M. Benkeser, R. Biritwum and A. G. Hill •

The Effect of Ghana’s National Health Insurance Scheme on Health Care Utilisation
N. J. Blanchet, G. Fink and I. Osei-Akoto •

Seasonal and Socio-Economic Variations in Clinical and Self-Reported Malaria in Accra, Ghana: Evidence From Facility Data and a Community Survey
C. Donovan, B. Siadat and J. Frimpong •

Symptoms of Common Mental Disorders and Their Correlates Among Women in Accra, Ghana: A Population-Based Survey
The Health of the Poor: Women Living in Informal Settlements
G. Fink, R. Arku and L. Montana •

September 2012, Vol. 46 No. 3

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Golden Jubilee of the Ghana Medical Journal
David Ofori-Adjei •

Mental Health 50 years ago
J. B. Asare •

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Outbreak Of Cholera in the East Akim Municipality of Ghana Following Unhygienic Practices by Small-Scale Gold Miners, November 2010
J.K.L Opare, C.Ohuabunwo, , E. Afari, F. Wurapa, S.O Sackey, J. Der, , K. Afakye, and E. Odei •

Prevalence of Childhood Overweight/Obesity in Basic School in Accra
H. Mohammed and F. Vuvor •

Patterns Of Health Service Utilization at a Medical School Clinic in Ghana
A. E. Yawson, , K. L. Malm, A.A. Adu, , G-M. Wontumi, and R.B. Biritwum •

Improving Medical Records Filing in a Municipal Hospital in Ghana

Malignant Tumours of the Genital Tract Among Batswana Women
M.N. Tanko, M.A. Kayembe, F. Cainelli And S. Vento •

Knowledge and Beliefs About Cervical Cancer Screening Among Men in Kumasi, Ghana
M. S. Williams and P. Amoateng •

SPECIAL ARTICLE

The Role of Plasma Melatonin and Vitamins C and B in the Development of Idiopathic Tinnitus in the Elderly
A. O. Lasisi, F. A. Fehintola, and T. J. Lasisi •

A Historical Survey of Psychiatric Practice in Ghana
E. B. Foster •

CASE REPORTS

Congenital Malaria In Newborn Twins
D. A. Opare •

The First Cases of Lassa Fever in Ghana

Reversible Binocular Visual Loss in Temporal Association with Artesunate-Amodiaquine
Complete Spontaneous Bone Regeneration Following Partial Mandibulectomy
A. E. Abdulai •

December 2012, Vol. 46 No. 4

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Aflatoxin exposure in pregnant women in Ghana / Loss of an Editor: R. K. Affram D. Ofori-Adjei •

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Socio-demographic determinants of aflatoxin b1-lysine adduct levels among pregnant women in Kumasi, Ghana
F. M. B. Shuaib, P. E. Jolly, J. E. Ehiri, W. O. Ellis, N. J. Yatich, E. Funk-Houser, S.D. Person, J. H. Williams, G. Qian and J-S Wang •

Challenges in provider payment under the Ghana National Health Insurance Scheme: a case study of claims management in two districts
S. Sodzi-Tettey, M. Aikins, J. K. Awoonor-Williams and I. A. Agyepong •

Effects of consumer and provider moral hazard at a municipal hospital outpatient department on Ghana’s National Health Insurance Scheme
A. E. Yawson, R. B. Biritwum and P.K. Nimo •

The feelings and experiences of patients with tuberculosis in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolitan district: implications for TB control efforts
E. A. Dodor •

Mass oseltamivir prophylaxis halts pandemic influenza a H1N1 2009 outbreak in a secondary school in Ashanti region, Ghana
F. Asiedu-Bekoe, D.A. Aduand and A. Offei •

Combined iron and zinc supplementation improves haematologic status of pregnant women in upper west region of Ghana
M. Saaka •

Epidemiology and prevention of nosocomial pneumonia associated with Panton-Valentine Leukocidin (PVL)-producing Staphylococcus aureus in departmental hospital centre of Zou Collines in Benin
T.A. Ahoyo, A. Martin-Odooom, H. S BankolÃ©, L. Baba-Moussa, N. Zonon, F. Loko, G. Prevost, A. Sanni and K. Dramane •

SPECIAL ARTICLE
Implementing the mental health act in Ghana: any challenges ahead?
V. C K Doku, A. Wusu-Takyi, and J. Awakame •

CASE REPORTS
Surgical reconstruction of penile stump in a patient with klingsor syndrome
T. Jindal, N. Ghosh, M. Kamal, R. K. Sharma, S. Mukherjee, S. N. Mandal and D. Karmakar •

Haemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis in a Ghanaian child
March 2013, Vol. 47 No. 1

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
Haemodialysis Treatment For End Stage Chronic Kidney Disease And Acute Kidney Injury In Africa
D. Adu

ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Haemodialysis Practice in a Resource-Limited Setting In the Tropics
Y. Okunola, O. Ayodele, P. Akinwusi, B. Gbadegesin And R. Oluyombo

Factors Contributing to Poor Management Outcome of Sinonasal Malignancies in South-West Nigeria
A. J. Fasunla And S. A. Ogunkeyede

Soluble Fluoride Levels in Drinking Water-A Major Risk Factor Of Dental Fluorosis Among Children in Bongo Community of Ghana
C. K. Firempong, K. Nsiah, D. Awunyo-Vitor And J. Dongsogo

Duration of Exclusive Breastfeeding and Subsequent Child Feeding Adequacy
R. N. O. Aryeetey And Y. E. Goh

Awareness and Attitudes Towards Face and Organ Transplant in Kumasi, Ghana
P. Agbenorku, M. Agbenorku And G. Agamah

Where, When And What Type Of Alcohol do Pregnant Women Drink?
Y. Adusi-Poku, A. A. Bonney And G. D. Antwi

SPECIAL ARTICLE
Towards an Improved Pathology Service in Ghana
J. T. Anim

CASE REPORTS
Chronic Daily Headache in a Patient with Cavum Septum Pellucidum and Cavum Verge
J-Jy Chen And D-L. Chen

Foreign Body in Scrotum Following a Boat Engine Blast Accident
S. D. Mante, E. D. Yeboah, B. Adusei And S. Edusa

Boerhaave's Syndrome: Diagnosis and Successful Primary Repair One Month After the Oesophageal Perforation: A Case Report
M. N. Tamatey, L. A Sereboe, M. M Tettey, K. Entsua-Mensah And B. Gyan

June 2013, Vol. 47 No. 2

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY
ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Progress With The Implementation Of Kangaroo Mother Care In Four Regions In Ghana

Couching Techniques For Cataract Treatment In Osogbo, South West Nigeria
M. A. Isawumi, O. U Kolawole and M. B Hassan •

Attitude And Beliefs Of Nigerian Undergraduates To Spectacle Wear
J. A. Ebeigbe, F. Kio and L. I. Okafor •

The Role Of Bone Marrow Aspirate And Trephine Samples In Haematological Diagnoses In Patients Referred To a Teaching Hospital in Ghana
G. Bedu-Addo, Y. Ampem-Amoako and I. Bates •

Helicobacter Pylori Infection In Nigerians With Dyspepsia
A.B. Olokoba, W. Gashau, S. Bwala, A. Adamu and S. K. Fatai •

Low Level Of Transmitted HIV Drug Resistance At Two HIV Care Centres In Ghana: A Threshold Survey

SPECIAL ARTICLE
Career Destinations Of University Of Ghana Medical School Graduates Of Various Year Groups
A. T. Lassey, P. D. Lassey and M. Boamah •

CASE REPORTS
Multicentric Castleman’s Disease In A Ghanaian Adult
Y. A. Dei-Adomakoh, C. Segbefia, I. Ekem and A. Taylor •

A Sudden Total Loss Of Vision After Routine Cataract Surgery
S. Lartey, P. Armah And A. Ampong •

Volume 47(3); September 2013

Editorial
Herbal Medicine Research

Original Research
Pattern of Breast Diseases in Accra: Review of Mammography Reports
EK Brakohiapa, GE Armah, JNA Clegg-Lamptey, WO Brakohiapa

Comparing the 810nm Diode Laser with Conventional Surgery in Orthodontic Soft Tissue Procedures
I N Ize-Iyamu, B D Saheeb, B E Edetanlen

G
TE Kwape, P Chaturvedi, J M Kamau, S George

Hypoglycemic and Antihyperglycemic Effect of Ceiba Pentandra L. Gaertn in Normal and Streptozotocin-induced Diabetic Rats
RJ Satyaprakash, MS Rajesh, M Bhanumathy, MS Harish, TN Shivananda, HN Shivaprasad, G Sushma

Sexual Harassment in Public Medical Schools in Ghana
I D Norman, M Aikins, F N Binka

Special Report
A Review of the Anticancer Potential of The Antimalarial Herbal Cryptolepis Sanguinolenta and Its Major Alkaloid Cryptolepine
C Ansah, K B Mensah
Case Reports
Pulmonary Echinococcal Cyst with a Filamentous Fungus Co-Infection
P Pandey, AK Dixit, A Tanwar, N C Mahajan

Idiopathic Pulmonary Calcification and Ossification in an Elderly Woman with a Missed Diagnosis of Subarachnoid Haemorrhage
M O Odubanjo, F B Abdulkareem, A Banjo, T E Ekwere, D I Awelimobor

Volume 47(4); December 2013

Commentary
Pregnancy Related Causes of Deaths in Ghana J D Seffah

Original Research
Pregnancy Related Causes of Deaths in Ghana: A 5-Year Retrospective Study
E M Der, C Moyer, R K Gyasi, A B Akosa, Y Tettey, P K Akakpo, A Blankson, J T Anim

The Immunological Response of Hiv-Positive Patients Initiating Haart at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana
L Annison, A Dompreh, Y Adu-Sarkodie

Adrenocortical Function in Nigerians With Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection
IA Odeniyi, OA Fasanmade, MO Ajala, AE Ohwovoriole

Perceptions of Medical Students About Family Medicine in Ghana
A Essuman, C Anthony-Krueger, T A Ndaniu

Indications and Complications of Major Limb Amputations in Kano, Nigeria
A Ajibade, OT Akinniyi, CS Okoye

The Relationship Between Metabolic Syndrome and Target Organ Damage in Ghanaian With Stage-2 Hypertension
B M Bello-Rodriguez, G Sanchez-Cruz, F Delgado-Bustillo, G Asiama

Special Article
An Exploratory Study of Physical Activity and Over-Weight in Two Senior High Schools
VK Nyawornota, R Aryeetey, S Bosomprah, M Aikins
Case Reports
Spontaneous Extra-Hepatic Bile Duct Perforation Postpartum
A A A Bediako-Bowan, J C B Dakubo, M Asempa

An Unusually Large Spindle Cell Sarcoma of the Tongue in a Male Child
A E Abdulai, I K Nuamah, D Avogo, R K Gyasi, L A Renner

Correspondence
Employment of Colour Flow Doppler to Identify the Tip of the Needle During Ultrasound Guided Nerve Blocks
Henry Baddoo, Robert Djagbletey, Christian Owoo

Link to Ghana Medical Journal Website for 2005 to 2013 articles.

Prepared by Dr Adziri Sackey & staff of College of Health Sciences Library, 2014
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*This page was compiled by Dr Adziri Sackey & Professor Kwadwo Koram.*