

Editorial Comments

In this issue of the journal, two manuscripts focusing on gender and health are brought to readers' attention because of their local relevance and clinical implications. In the article by Okeahialam and Muoneme, gender differences in the aetiology, risk factors and pattern of presentation of heart failure were documented. Of note is the higher frequency of hypertension in female patients which appears contrary to the epidemiological documentation of higher frequency of hypertension in males from the non-communicable disease survey in Nigeria conducted by Akinkugbe *et al.* As a result one would expect that the complications of hypertension would be more in male patients but not with respect to heart failure in the cohort studied. Such a finding from this study calls for more investigations into the co-morbid conditions that might be contributory. The greater use of alcohol and tobacco products by the male patients was associated with more cardiovascular disease risk factors in them. This study sends a powerful message on the way forward for health promotion and prevention of chronic cardiovascular diseases which are expected to increase sharply in low and low-middle income countries if adequate care is not taken.

The number of women having breast masses continues to increase and it is important to have reliable and cost-effective means of making accurate diagnosis. The article by Oluwasola and other authors revealed that tru-cut biopsy has a sensitivity of 86% and accuracy of 80% when compared with excisional biopsy. However, higher specificity is always desirable so as to reduce false positivity. In this study, the specificity was very low for benign lesions which presumably should be higher in frequency of occurrence than malignant lesions. Thus, this diagnostic modality would be ideal for malignant lesions; but for benign lesions, excision biopsy would still be recommended until there are refinements and image-guided biopsy can be done. The key message is early presentation for timely diagnosis.

In observational studies, there are always more questions than answers and these two studies highlight important issues for consideration in clinical and laboratory diagnosis as well as in optimal management.

Reference

Akinkugbe OO ed. Non communicable diseases in Nigeria: Final report. Ministry of Health, Abuja, Nigeria. 1997.

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