

## Editorial

### Annette Gerritsen – epidemiology consultant at Epi Result

In this last issue of the SACEMA Quarterly in 2010 we present articles on a variety of issues.

In the March 2009 issue, an article was published on a randomised controlled trial that failed to show the effectiveness of the vaginal microbicide gel Carraguard to protect women from becoming HIV infected (1). The first article in the current issue gives an update on the evidence for the efficacy of microbicides. Furthermore, the results of a recent study that looked at the cost-effectiveness of this intervention are reported.

The second article reports on abuse and neglect experienced by AIDS orphans (and other vulnerable children) and their perceived social support. This is an emerging issue as, in 2010, sub-Saharan Africa was home to an estimated 18.4 million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and, in the absence of universal access to antiretroviral treatment (ART), the number of AIDS orphans is expected to rise to 40 million by 2020. The importance of this topic is also illustrated by the fact that from 31 October to 3 November 2010 the first conference on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Africa – Don't turn a blind eye - was held in Sandton, Johannesburg.

Another emerging topic is the abuse of drugs; the enormous rise in the prevalence in the past years and hence the increase in the need for treatment. This is illustrated by the example of the methamphetamine abuse in the Western Cape Province in the third article.

In the September 2009 issue an article was published on the development of baits for tsetse flies, authored by Glyn Vale (2). In the short items of the current issue, an article is published giving you some background to this issue, by describing the early work of Glyn Vale. Another short item presents an update on the 'treatment as prevention' issue, as this continues to be an area of much discussion. Finally a short item is published on the issue of the importance of concurrency in the high incidence rate of HIV in Africa.

We hope you will all enjoy reading this issue. Next year we will continue publishing the SACEMA Quarterly magazine after giving it a slight makeover.

**Annette Gerritsen**, epidemiology consultant at Epi Result. Areas of interest: research methodology, infectious diseases epidemiology, migration and health. *Annette.gerritsen @epiresult.com*

#### References:

1. Gerritsen AAM. Lancet reports: Carraguard not effective in prevention of HIV. SACEMA Quarterly, issue March 2009. [[http://www.sacemaquarterly.com/index.php?page=detailview&p\\_id=3&d\\_id=4](http://www.sacemaquarterly.com/index.php?page=detailview&p_id=3&d_id=4)] Accessed 19 November, 2010.
2. Vale G. Development of baits for tsetse flies: much done, more to do. SACEMA Quarterly, issue September 2009. [[http://www.sacemaquarterly.com/magazines.php?page=detailview&p\\_id=12&d\\_id=28](http://www.sacemaquarterly.com/magazines.php?page=detailview&p_id=12&d_id=28)] Accessed 19 November, 2010.