



the dangers of tobacco could cost it 'hundreds of millions of rands.'

Once again it puts its own profits above its customers' welfare. In sharp contrast to Merck, this irresponsible industry wants to laugh all the way to the bank, while its customers and their families limp to hospitals and early graves.

Yussuf Saloojee

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Pruritus ani

To the Editor: I read the short piece in a recent *SAMJ*¹ reporting on a small clinical trial of capsaicin in the treatment of pruritus ani. I have never understood the logic of using a counter-irritant to treat skin lesions. I would expect such topical treatment to aggravate the lesions.

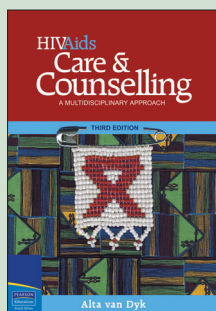
The report correctly points out that pruritus ani is perpetuated by, *inter alia*, irritant chemicals in faeces. Therefore I tell my patients that they must not use toilet paper, which serves to rub the faeces into the inflamed peri-anal skin. They must programme themselves to defecate in the comfort of their own home, and to use only soap and water thereafter. The vicious scratch-itch cycle can be broken using 1% hydrocortisone ointment 12-hourly.

This simple management was told to me when a student by that mainstay of good patient care — an experienced rural general practitioner. I can assure your readers that it works, at minimal cost. Very similar management has recently been promoted in South Africa.²

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1. A novel and effective treatment for pruritus ani (In Brief). *S Afr Med J* 2004; **94**: 912.
2. Saxe N, Jessop S, Todd G. *Handbook of Dermatology for Primary Care*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1997: 162-163.



This book is for people whose lives are touched by HIV and Aids: those who are HIV-positive themselves, and those who are affected by people who have HIV or Aids.

This third edition has been updated to reflect the most recent advances in research on the HI virus, and to address more fully:

- the use of anti-retroviral therapy
- tuberculosis
- sexually transmitted infections
- home-based care
- support for the caregiver
- care of orphans and other vulnerable children.

It provides knowledge, skills and support for every aspect of living with HIV/Aids, and will be invaluable to counsellors, nurses, home-based caregivers, social workers, teachers, doctors, therapists, spiritual workers, volunteers, as well as to people living with HIV and their loved ones.

Issues addressed include:

- the fundamental facts about HIV/Aids
- principles and strategies for enabling behaviour change
- HIV/Aids and life skills training for schoolchildren
- basic counselling principles and skills
- pre- and post-HIV-test counselling
- counselling in various contexts, including crisis counselling, couple counselling, and counselling children
- spiritual and bereavement counselling
- nursing care principles for hospitals, clinics and in the home
- the legal and ethical aspects of HIV/Aids and policy development.

Special attention is paid to women and children's issues and rights, self-awareness and attitudes, cross-cultural counselling, and traditional African beliefs and customs. Practical advice is offered on how to care for people in health care settings with limited resources, facilities and finances, such as those found in many clinics and homes in Africa.

About the author:

Professor Alta van Dyk is a psychologist, professional nurse, and HIV/Aids counsellor and educator. She is a lecturer at the University of South Africa, where she teaches psychology and courses in HIV/Aids care and counselling.

'Thank you for addressing and dealing with every issue that manifests with caring for the HIV/Aids infected person. HIV/Aids Care & Counselling is a MUST for every care giver, professional or lay.' Gail Johnson - *Nkosi Johnson's mother*

HIV/Aids care and counselling: a multidisciplinary approach
Third edition

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