



Notwithstanding these encouraging results we remain actively involved in further validation studies not limited to the BED-CEIA but will also explore the suitability of testing algorithms involving, for example, antibody avidity testing. There is emerging consensus that validated laboratory based tests are the method of choice to estimate national HIV incidence and assess the impact of national prevention programmes.

1. Parekh B, Kennedy S, Dobbs T, *et al.* Quantitative detection of increasing HIV type 1 antibodies after seroconversion: A simple assay for detecting recent HIV infection and estimating incidence. *AIDS Res Hum Retroviruses* 2002; 18(4): 295-307.
2. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Surveillance and Survey and Laboratory Working Groups. Expert meeting on the validation of the BED HIV-1 incidence assay for HIV-1 incidence surveillance. CDC, Atlanta, USA, 9-10 May 2006.
3. UNAIDS. *Statement on the Use of the BED-assay for the Estimation of HIV-1 Incidence for Surveillance or Epidemic Monitoring*. Report of a meeting of the UNAIDS Reference Group for Estimates, Modelling and Projections, Athens, Greece, 13-15 December 2005. Geneva: UNAIDS, 2005.
4. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Surveillance and Survey and Laboratory Working Groups. *Guidelines for the Use of the BED Capture Enzyme Immunoassay for Incidence Estimation and Surveillance*. Atlanta, USA: CDC, 2006.
5. McDougal JS, Parekh, BS, Peterson ML, *et al.* Comparison of HIV-1 incidence observed during longitudinal follow-up with incidence estimated by cross-sectional analysis using the BED capture enzyme immunoassay. *AIDS Res Hum Retroviruses* 2006; (10): 945-952.
6. Karita E, Price M, Hunter E, *et al.* Investigating the utility of the HIV-1 BED capture enzyme immunoassay using cross-sectional and longitudinal seroconverter specimens from Africa. *AIDS* 2007; 21: 403-408.
7. Rehle T, Dorrington R, Shisana O, *et al.* National HIV incidence estimates: direct measures compared with mathematical modelling. Paper presented at the 3rd South African AIDS Conference, Durban, 5-8 June 2007.

African section of e-journal *Rural and Remote Health*

To the Editor: We read with interest the *SAMJ* article 'Scope and geographical distribution of African medical journals active in 2005' by Siegfried *et al.*,¹ and would like to bring to your readers' attention the recent launch of an African section of the e-journal *Rural and Remote Health (RRH)*. This regional section has a particularly African flavour, owing to its own editorial board and peer-review panel, but is under the umbrella of the international journal.

We hope that the African section will add to the initiatives described by Siegfried *et al.* and address some of the issues raised in their article. *RRH* is an international, peer-reviewed, open-access journal. It is Medline-listed. It aims to offer wider world exposure for quality African research in the area of rural and remote health care education, policy and practice. We

believe the issues of rural and remote health are relevant to most of Africa.

Because *RRH* is an electronic journal it affords authors timely publication on an article-by-article basis. In addition, the electronic format means that *RRH* is not geographically bound, and therefore offers rural and remote authors and users an all-of-Africa approach to publication.

In a recent *RRH* editorial to coincide with the launch of the African section, we recognised the impact of inadequate access to information on the problems of health and health care in Africa.² We also discussed the issue of inequity in access to the Internet, which has been highlighted for urgent attention by the Commission for Africa,³ and recent initiatives to improve the current situation of variable access.^{4,5} We offer the African section of *RRH* as a small contribution towards this.

The Journal can be accessed at www.rrh.org.au. Users should select 'African section' from the main menu on the home page.

Jennifer Richmond

Production Editor, RRH
Australian Rural Health Education Network
Canberra, ACT
Australia

Ian Couper

Editor, African section, RRH
Professor of Rural Health
Department of Family Medicine
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg
couperid@medicine.wits.ac.za

Paul Worley

Editor-in-chief, RRH
Professor and Director
Rural Clinical School
Flinders University, South Australia

1. Siegfried N, Busgeeth K, Certain E. Scope and geographical distribution of African medical journals active in 2005. *S Afr Med J* 2006; 96: 533-538.
2. Couper ID, Worley PS. Health and information in Africa: the role of the journal *Rural and Remote Health*. *Rural and Remote Health* 6 (online), 2006: 644. <http://rrh.deakin.edu.au> (last accessed 14 September 2006).
3. Dare L, Buch E. The future of health care in Africa. *BMJ* 2005; 331: 1-2.
4. Katikireddi SV. HINARI: bridging the global information divide. *BMJ* 2004; 328: 1190-1193.
5. Beveridge M, Howard A, Burton K, Holder W. The Ptolemy project: a scalable model for delivering health information in Africa. *BMJ* 2003; 327: 790-793.