

HIV vasculopathy reviewed

This issue of the *South African Journal of Surgery* is unique: it consists exclusively of invited reviews. Its genesis was triggered by the sad realisation that South African surgeons have probably accumulated more experience in the handling of HIV-related vascular disease than anyone else in the world. This started during the dark days of state denial when, while our newly democratic government incomprehensibly denied a basic human right to its citizens, clinicians had to work out elementary principles of treatment from scratch. At present, when at least a proportion of the needy are permitted access to drugs that can restore immune competence, the treatment of the afflicted is less hopeless; nevertheless, even now the majority still do not have access to lifesaving agents. This virus affects every facet of the practice of medicine; no discipline, system, organ or practitioner is spared the chaotic

ravages of the plague. The vascular system is no exception; understandings that had served us for millennia have had to be abandoned, and systems of pathology and appropriate treatments elucidated anew.

The papers include discussions of the pathogenesis of HIV vasculopathy; venous thrombo-embolic disease; arterial occlusive conditions; cardiac, cerebral and renal manifestations; Kaposi's sarcoma; and the influence of antiretroviral therapy. Surgeons from across South Africa have contributed papers wrung from their hard-earned understanding, and we hope that this collected experience will guide practitioners throughout the continent.

G. J. Oettle

Editor