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On the critical list

Good news and bad news this issue. We'll commence with the good: WHO is now recommending that ARV treatment of HIV-positive patients should commence when their CD4 count drops to 350 rather than waiting till it is at 200 (see page 21). Logistically this brings challenges, but it is a huge leap forward for both patient and carer. Thank you WHO.

And the bad news? Alas this might be the last issue of *Africa Health* that you see. Funding for *Africa Health* has never been less than tricky, and as I write it is very much in the balance whether we can raise the funds we need to sustain the publication. Two of our key donor supporters have had their budgets cut and have had to withdraw their support at the end of 2009. Crucial discussions are taking place with other agencies who care about medical knowledge and communication.

It will be important that as many of you as possible complete the Readership Questionnaire that adjoins this page and let me know what you think of the publication. We've got twelve generous prizes (donated by three of our clients: Durbin plc, EKF Diagnostic, and Health-Care Supplies) which will go to individuals whose completed questionnaires are picked from a suitable receptacle by an independent person when the deadline for entries expires. It is vital to us that we get strong feedback as donors will only support the journal's continued existence if they can see solid evidence that it is providing a useful service. So please, positive or negative, provide us with your feedback.

It almost seems ironic that in the

breath after announcing that we are an endangered species, the next breath announces the arrival of our new web site. You can now go to: www.africa-health.com and find the journal available online on an open access basis. In time, we intend to add a considerable additional knowledge centre to the web-site. Discussions are underway with a number of specialist providers and I'm confident that this is just the beginning towards a site that will become an essential reference centre. As ever, any thoughts you might have as to additional material for inclusion on the site, will be warmly entertained. Sites for our sister journals, the *African Journal of Respiratory Medicine*, and the *African Journal of Diabetes Medicine* will also be live and accessed either directly or via the *Africa Health* site.

The web can be a fantastically useful resource base, but I know for many of you, good old paper in the form of a journal like *Africa Health* remains the medium of choice for medical update. Let's hope we can keep it running.

All best

Bryan Pearson

