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Family medicine, facilities, and forms

The importance of Family Medicine practitioners gets a further airing in this issue of *Africa Health* with an impassioned letter on the subject on page 13. It remains a Cinderella discipline, and yet in so many situations, evidence indicates that it ought to be the most appropriate physician training if Africa's MDG targets are ever to be met. The so-called 'super specialties' have never really accepted its credentials as being 'legitimate' which is unfortunate as so much hospital-based care in the traditional subsets is reactive rather than proactive.

Particularly at the district level, the all-rounder can have such an impact: handling the main disease burden from their area (and referring the complex cases), undertaking essential surgery such as the life-saving obstetric surgical procedures as well as common presentations like hernia, and championing aspects of public health in their communities. We hear that the University of Nairobi medical school is launching a family medicine training programme. Hopefully it is just a matter of time before full respect is vested.

This issue sees another new columnist join us, with a particularly important new angle of coverage. Andrei Issakov has a lifetime of experience from the top level of WHO in Geneva. His subject: hospital facilities, and the technology therein. It is a huge subject area, and of signal importance to many of our readers as without effective buildings or working equipment, hospitals and health centres are reduced to mere consulting rooms. Hopefully this will be a valuable new line of editorial coverage from *Africa Health*.

Now back in January we included a Readership Survey and invited readers to complete a form and provide us with some feedback on what they think of the journal. We also asked you about issues

such as the ease of computer access. I'm pleased to say, although we didn't extend to providing a free reply paid envelope, several hundred of you took the time to complete the forms and send them into us. Once we have this issue to the printer we'll sit down to analyse the responses and learn what we can from them (and I'll include a summary for readers in the November issue) but first things first: we offered 12 prizes to be drawn from the completed forms sent in. We put them in a box, closed the lid, tumbled it several times, and then invited staff to dip their hand in and bring out the winning forms. I'm delighted to announce the following:

First prize: £600 surgical set (donated by Durbin plc):

Dr Filimon Haile, from Asmara, Eritrea

Second prize: Hemoglobin Counter (donated by EKB):

Andrew Chulu, Mkorokoso, Zambia

Third prize: 10 stethoscopes (donated by HealthCare Equipment and Supplies):

Dr Edward Osewe, Nairobi, Kenya;

Dr Fazall Fayyuz-Ud-Din, Mauritius;

Dr Amirize Ezekwe, Port Harcourt, Nigeria;

Dr Yibeltal Zewdi Tiruneh, Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia;

Brigid Quinn, Tiko, Cameroon;

Getrude Bako, Arua, Uganda;

Dr Anthony Adeshina, Lokoja, Nigeria;

Dr Ebenezer Asiamah, Ada-Foah, Ghana;

Dr Alhaji Aliyu, Zaria, Nigeria;

and finally, Dr Chukwu Onyeneke,

Benin City, Nigeria.

Congratulations to

all. Prizes will be

sent to you.

Best wishes

Bryan Pearson

