

EDITORIAL

Afterword to men's health in Asia: special issue of *Asian Journal of Andrology*

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As professor Tan, Guest Editor of the Special Issue on Men's Health in Asia, *Asian Journal of Andrology*, indicated in his foreword that this special issue reveals the many varied facets of men's health in Asia, including four papers on current status of men's health in different countries of Asia, four papers on men's sexual function, four on men's aging, one on prostate cancer and another four on male contraceptive, environmental impact and traditional medicine, respectively. After reading these papers carefully, we could reach the following common understanding:

- The current status of male health in Asia is still far from satisfactory and varies significantly from country to country in this diversified region. Estimate of 15% of the disease burden is associated with failures to address male health needs. Focus is needed on the provision of an integrated health service package, as well as on the modification and building of essential health care system, especially in rural areas, in urban slums and migrating people residences.¹
- Issues in male health occur over the entire lifespan of male and are compounded by a varieties of social, cultural, educational and economic factors, as well as personal life style, behavior, dietary habits and accompanied diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and mental problems.²
- Based on these observations, the scope and mission of Andrology should be expanded accordingly, from being traditionally concerned with issues related to male infertility, erectile dysfunction and prostate diseases in the past to broader interests in wide aspects to male reproductive health and male health in general.
- One of the big challenges we are faced with now is accelerating population aging in Asia. To meet this challenge, we must take a new strategy, namely, from conventional 'treatment-only mode' to a 'prevention and health promotion mode'. Hormone replacement therapy is only one of the solutions. New approaches to early diagnosis, risk assessment and prediction, prevention and lifestyle changes, public education and

awareness, as well as using traditional and herb medicine, are being added to our armamentarium.

- One of our major tasks now is the elaboration of a comprehensive, yet realistic male reproductive health research agenda that reflects the needs and demands of Asia. To this end, it is important for us to approach make full use of an interdisciplinary translational medicine. In addition, there is also a need for a whole lifespan longitudinal studies of men to identify factors and determinants influencing the development of andrological disorders.³
- The development of male health policies and health care services requires the collection of baseline information concerning whole spectrum of male health in population both in advanced and less advanced areas in Asia using unbiased sampling techniques, in order to explore the ways of reaching men with the view to positively influence their reproductive care-seeking behavior, including participation in family planning, practice of safe sex, early seeking of clinical care for diagnosis and treatment of infertility, RTIs/HIV/AIDS and prostate diseases, lifestyle adjusting for a healthy aging life, as well as including men's support for maternal and child health, prevention of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion and the empowerment of women.

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- 1 World Health Organization. The Lancet Sexual and Reproductive Health Series. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2006.
- 2 de Kretser DM. Determinants of male health: the interaction of biological and social factors. *Asian J Androl* 2010; 12: 291–7.
- 3 Wang YF. Life science progress and andrology development. *Asian J Androl* 2009; 12: 133–5.