

## Editorial Commentary

# Articles from Around the Globe

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According to the World Health Organization, infectious diseases are spreading around the world faster than ever and new diseases are emerging at the unprecedented rate of one a year. Since 1967 at least 39 new pathogens have been identified, including human immunodeficiency virus, Ebola haemorrhagic fever, Marburg fever and severe acute respiratory syndrome. At the same time, old infections, such as pandemic influenza, malaria, and tuberculosis, continue to pose a threat to public health.

With the rise in susceptible populations caused by advances in medicine and old age, healthcare-associated infections are gaining prominence. Multi-drug resistant organisms such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), vancomycin-resistant Enterococci (VRE) and extended spectrum  $\beta$ -lactamase (ESBL) Gram-negative microbes, continue to pose a threat in healthcare facilities worldwide. In addition, outbreaks of diarrhoea caused by *Clostridium difficile* and norovirus are a major problem in hospitals and not only in the developed world.

The Infection Control Team (ICT) within healthcare facilities is a specialist team of individuals who have to rise up to the challenges in dealing with infections acquired both from hospital and community. Most often they have to work in very difficult and challenging circumstances and their contributions are often not recognised. It is therefore encouraging to see efforts to acknowledge their efforts. The Oxoid Infection Control Team Award was started in 2003 with an aim of acknowledging and recognising the contributions of the ICT. These awards are distributed on an annual basis and based on the contributions of the ICT's during the previous calendar year.

Judging from past entries, this has become a truly international award in infection prevention and control. The

International Federation of Infection Control is happy to collaborate in this initiative from one of its patron member companies. In addition to participating in the adjudicating panel, we are pleased to share the achievements and contributions made by the ICTs who entered the award for 2006 by publishing selected entries in this edition of the *International Journal of Infection Control*.

Also featured in this truly international issue are select articles from winners of the 2007 IFIC Patricia Lynch Scholarship Awards. The Federation places great emphasis on the participation of delegates from developing countries at its annual Congress. In order to facilitate this attendance, IFIC works with the Local Organising Committee to make available a number of scholarships. These can only be funded as a result of the continuous support of our member societies, representatives from industry as well as individual infection control colleagues. The IFIC Board is extremely proud of all scholarship winners and congratulates them for their dedication to the profession.