



Research Briefs

History

Daily life in exile at SWAPO's Kongwa Camp

Since 1964, when it was granted by the Tanzanian government to Organization of African Unity recognised liberation movements, Kongwa camp has been a key site in southern African history. First SWAPO and FRELIMO, and later the ANC, the MPLA and ZAPU, inhabited neighbouring sites near the town of Kongwa in central Tanzania, where they trained their respective members in guerrilla tactics and prepared to infiltrate their countries of origin. Christian Williams from the University of the Western Cape highlights the Namibian occupancy at Kongwa during the 1960s, and traces the formation of a national hierarchy through the international relations of everyday camp life. Williams emphasises that these relations have been obscured by national histories, and that a regional approach to exile which attends to the transnational sites where exiles lived is thus required.

Kronos: Southern African Histories – Special Issue on Africa and the Cold War 2011;37:44–70.

Surgery

Control of secondary microbial infections

Staphylococcus aureus infection is a major complication of orthopaedic surgery and may lead to the permanent damage of bone and tissue. Treatment with antibiotics is often ineffective, mainly as a result of poor penetration within bone, and biofilms on implants can prevent the migration of immune cells to infected areas. Anton van Staden and colleagues from Stellenbosch University incorporated nisin F, an antimicrobial peptide defined as a lantibiotic, into self-setting brushite cement. This bone cement was then implanted subcutaneously into an area infected with *S. aureus*. The peptide slowly diffused from the bone cement and prevented the growth of *S. aureus* for 7 days; the wounds healed without signs of infection. Nisin F did not change the cement's structure or chemistry, so its incorporation into bone cement could be the answer to the control of post-operative *S. aureus* infections.

Journal of Applied Microbiology 2012;112:831–840.

Pharmacology

Lactobacillus equigenerosi: A novel drug delivery system?

Lactic acid bacteria (*Lactobacillus* spp.) have been well studied for their antimicrobial and probiotic properties. In most species their interaction with the mucous and epithelial cells of their hosts has been well studied. Marlie Botha and colleagues from Stellenbosch University have discovered that *Lactobacillus equigenerosi*, a species found only in horses and zebras, has the unique ability to penetrate healthy human epithelial cells. The *L. equigenerosi* strain Le1 adhered to viable buccal epithelial cells and invaded them within 20 minutes after contact. Treatment of Le1 cells with pronase prevented the penetration of epithelial cells and treatment with pepsin delayed invasion up to an hour, clearly indicating the presence of specific receptors on the cell surface. However, *L. equigenerosi* did not adhere to non-viable epithelial cells; fluorescent microscopy images revealed viable bacterial cells in the cytoplasm of healthy epithelial cells. Could *L. equigenerosi* Le1 be used as a novel drug delivery system? Experiments with other cell lines are in progress.

Applied and Environmental Microbiology 2012;78:4248–4255.

Linguistics

South African court interpreters need a defined role

In South Africa, legislation that clearly defines the role of court interpreters does not exist, and often court interpreters find themselves performing tasks which should be the responsibility of other legal officials. Samuel Lebeso from the University of South Africa considered how the lack of a clearly defined role for court interpreters affects the quality of their interpreting. Lebeso adopted both a top-down and a bottom-up approach in his study. In the former, he analysed legislation and related texts to determine whether the role of court interpreters had been clearly defined, and in the latter he used abstracts of courtroom proceedings in English and Setswana to reflect on the role played by court interpreters during trials. By shedding more light on the role of the court interpreter, he shows how a defined role could lead to better quality interpreting.

Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies 2011;29(3):343–357.

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