

## SSI/ISID Fellowship Report



**Alain Kenfak**

*Alain Kenfak is a Medical Doctor graduated from University of Yaoundé-1 in Cameroon in 2006. After graduation, he has been working for two years in the field of HIV infection as clinician and with the French AIDS Research Agency (ANRS) in Cameroon. He then joined the Infectious Diseases Service of the University Hospital of Lausanne in Switzerland, as research fellow, where he conducted and participated in several studies. After the internship, he intends to complete his training in Infectious Diseases.*

With an SSI/ISID Fellowship, Dr. Alain Kenfak recently concluded an internship at the Infectious Diseases Service of University Hospital of Lausanne. He participated as co-investigator, under the supervision of Dr. Matthias Cavassini, to research activities among subjects followed at the HIV outpatient clinic. The main topic of his studies was hepatitis E infection. During his time in Lausanne, he worked on the following projects.

### **Incidence and Risk Factors for Chronic Elevation of ALT Levels in HIV-Infected Persons without Hepatitis B or C Virus Co-Infection**

*Published in Clinical Infectious Diseases (CID)*

Due to the lack of data regarding elevated ALT levels among HIV-positive patients without chronic viral hepatitis, a study was done of the incidence of and risk factors for chronic elevation among a total of 2365 participants, of ALT levels (greater than the upper limit of normal at 2 consecutive semi-annual visits) in participants of the Swiss HIV Cohort Study without hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection who were seen during the period 2002–2008.

### **Hepatitis E Virus Sero-prevalence and Chronic Infection in HIV Patients with Unexplained ALT Elevation: The Swiss HIV Cohort Study**

*Abstract presented at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections*

The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence and role of HEV among a large cohort of HIV infected patients with a history of persistent elevated ALT without HBV or HCV co-infection. Screening was carried out on participants of the Swiss HIV Cohort Study, enrolled between 1988 and December 2008, without HBV/HCV infections and with chronic ALT elevation (values >60 U/L at  $\geq 2$  consecutive visits) for the presence of anti-HEV IgG. HEV IgG serology (Genelabs Diagnostics HEV ELISA) was performed on the latest stored plasma sample independently of the last ALT values. When available, in subjects with a positive serology, HEV serology and blood HEV real-time TaqMan PCR was performed on a plasma sample stored 3 months prior to the first documented elevated ALT value. In those patients, HEV PCR was also performed on samples stored at the time of and 3 months after the first documented elevated ALT.

### **Hepatitis E infection among blood donors in Switzerland**

*Abstract accepted for the Congress of the Swiss Society of Internal Medicine*

In the light of the recent high Hepatitis E virus (HEV) sero-prevalence found in developed countries, an assessment was made on the HEV sero-prevalence among blood donors in the southwest of Switzerland. 550 consecutive blood donations from the Service Régional Vaudois de Transfusion Sanguine of Epalinges were screened for the presence of anti-HEV IgG (MP Diagnostics HEV ELISA).

Dr. Kenfak also participated to the writing of some case reports of patients followed at the clinic:

- An oropharyngeal leishmaniasis mimicking a cancer: in press (Clinical Infectious Diseases)
- Periurethral abscess following a gonococcal urethritis: (in submission)

---

*This 15 months training was a very exciting personal and professional experience. It offered me new skills and perspectives in the field of infectious diseases; and as young investigator, it was a great opportunity to be involved in such a prolific research unit. I am grateful to ISID and SSI for supporting this project. I would like to thank specially Dr. Cavassini and all the Infectious Disease Service staff, for their kindness and their support.*