

nations for the increase in disability brought about by the global rise in musculoskeletal conditions. Written in collaboration with the Bone and Joint Decade Initiative, (see our theme issue, Volume 81(9), for further details), the report provides a snapshot of the extent of the problem and its impact. It is also intended to act as a baseline against which the effects of health interventions can be measured.

The 150 musculoskeletal conditions mentioned in the report affect millions of people in both developing and developed countries all over the world. They are the most frequent cause of disability and are amongst the most costly illnesses because of the long-term care and support they require. Total costs of musculoskeletal disease in the US in 2000 have been estimated at US\$ 254 billion. In developing countries, the figure is estimated at US\$ 100 billion, nearly twice that of total foreign aid for these nations.

These figures are expected to rise. "There will be a marked increase in requirements for health care and community support in the coming years," said Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health. One of the major diseases mentioned in the report is osteoporosis. In 1990 there were 1.7 million related hip fractures worldwide and this figure is expected to increase to 6 million by 2050. (See the article, "Exercise interventions: defusing the world's osteoporosis time bomb," on pp X-X in this issue of the *Bulletin*).

The reasons for the continuing rise in numbers of those affected by musculoskeletal conditions include, in the developing world, successful treatment of communicable diseases combined with a rapid increase in road traffic accidents. The increasing number of elderly people has been a major contributing factor to a similar rise in developed countries. ■

## WHO manual on child health awarded the 2003 Prescrire Prize

The 2002 French edition of "*Management of the Child with a Serious Infection or Severe Malnutrition: Guidelines for care at the first-referral level in developing countries*" has been awarded the 2003 Prescrire Prize for Medical and Pharmaceutical Books.

"This guide about clinical practice, written in a simple language, entirely devoted to clinical practice with clear explanatory drawings will be understood by all health workers. It deserves to be widely distributed to all hospitals in developing countries," said the panel of independent judges.

*Prescrire* is a French monthly, non-profit, medical journal aiming to promote the international exchange of quality information on new drugs and therapeutics. Each month *Prescrire* selects medical and pharmaceutical literature for independent review and at the end of the year, the best are shortlisted for nomination for the annual Prescrire Prize.

Judges examined seven nominations selected from publications reviewed in the journal between October 2002 and September 2003 (issues 232 to 242). Three of these were awarded, in equal merit, the 2003 Prescrire Prize. The manual on child health, originally published in English in 2000 by WHO's Child and Adolescent Health and Development Department was one of the three winners. It is intended for use by doctors, senior nurses and other health workers who are responsible for the care of young children at the first referral level

in developing countries. It presents up-to-date clinical guidelines, prepared by experts, for both inpatient and outpatient care in small hospitals where there may be limited resources. The publication is a result of an international collaborative effort between specialists in child health from WHO and other experts in developing and developed countries.

"The challenge was how to devise effective methods and treatment without relying on sophisticated equipment and medicines that readers would not have access to," said Dr Olivier Fontaine of WHO's Child and Adolescent Health and Development Department.

Another WHO publication, *International Travel and Health* published in 2002 by the Department of Communicable Diseases, was among this year's list of seven nominees. ■

### Erratum

In "WHO News", in the article "New low-cost meningitis vaccine developed in record time" on page 776, of Vol. 81, issue number 10, 2003, Dr Asamoah-Baah's remark on the importance of delivering the new vaccine should read: "The tragedy of meningitis will be compounded if we cannot get this new vaccine to those who need it most", and not as quoted.