

Editorial

*'The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee'.**

The relevance of the above extract from a poem by Lord Byron about a battle that was fought more than two millennia ago, may be found in a Review Article beginning page 1 in this journal.

Despite a number of meaningful papers over many years there is still an indiscriminate use of antimicrobials, when their use is neither necessary nor required. The reasons for this thesis have been explained times without number. Consequently, the 'Assyrians': the Multiple Drug Resistant organisms that prey upon defenceless animals and humans 'gathered within their folds' – their shepherds taking the attitude that 'something else' that will be found that will be effective against the 'cohorts in purple and gold'. Meanwhile the 'Angel of Death spread his wing' over many who should never have been put at risk.

Nosocomial infections! What is it going to take to have all clinicians disown the common practice of dispensing antimicrobials, *without just cause*. Physicians prescribing antimicrobials for children because the parent thinks that they must have them. Veterinarians dispensing them 'so that owners have something to give to their animals', be they a family pet or animals living in barns. In other words, they accede to an owners' request, 'because they (the owners) might go somewhere else where they are able to buy the medication'. What is going to dissuade clinicians from employing antimicrobials after a sterile operation on a sterile site?: as a so-called 'prophylactic', despite the recommendations, in the literature, to the contrary? Taking the attitude that giving antibiotics 'even if they do not do any good in a particular case – they cannot do any harm', is abso-

lute balderdash and wrong. And it should be responded to in kind !

It is high time that some members of the legal profession understood that the use of antimicrobials is not a panacea to be used on every patient. To recommend suing clinicians, because antimicrobials were not employed in certain cases and suggesting that the lack of use thereof did not conform to 'that which is accepted practice at this time', is not judicious advice to give a client.

*'For the Angel of Death spread his wing
on the blast'*

*And breathed in the face of the foe as he
pass'd;*

*And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly
and chill*

*And their hearts but once heaved, and for
ever grew still!**

In his Review Article in this edition of VCOT, Dr. Scott Weese gives us an excellent overview of the current state of affairs regarding the infectious agents that are currently scourging patients.

In a following article, which will be published in the next edition of VCOT, 2/2008, Dr. Weese takes us further into the problems when he discusses the inherent infection in some situations in orthopaedic surgery. Scary stuff! And currently very worrisome.



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Reference

- *1. Baron GG Byron. The Destruction of Sennacherib. 1788–1824.