

# ACA NEWSFILE

(Publication of the Advisory Council on AIDS, Hong Kong)

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ACA Secretariat

Vol 7, no. 10 -- October 2000 (issue no. 82)

## . Calendar.

### XXXIVth Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30pm 13 October 2000

### Vth Meeting of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC)

6:00pm 13 December 2000

### XXth Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30pm 5 October 2000

### IVth Meeting of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CPA)

2:30pm 4 January 2001

### *Change of meeting date*

**THE XXth Meeting of the Scientific Committee has been postponed, and would now be held on 5 October 2000. The Secretariat apologises for any inconvenience that might have been caused because of this change. t**

Hong Kong Virtual AIDS Office  
<http://www.info.gov.hk/aids>

## In this issue.....

Read **Council News** (page 40) - the section that summarises the discussions in the recent meetings of the committees

and some debates reported in the overseas media (page 41)

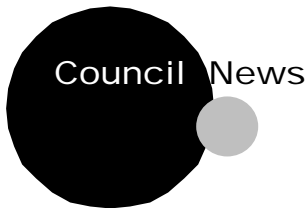
## New Plan for CPA

AFTER holding three committee meetings and numerous meetings of the core teams, the *Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS* (CPA) is set to move to a new phase. First of all, discussions of the core teams have resulted in a preliminary list of strategies which would need to be consolidated and further refined. On the other hand, the Committee has started a new forum to discuss "cases" of interest. The last meeting was devoted to lively debates on an HIV infected injecting drug user who disclosed his identity in a newspaper, and who had submitted himself to a mandatory HIV test required by a drug rehabilitation agency. The Committee considered it important to have timely discussion on such "cases" so that appropriate courses of action could be recommended. This deliberation of "cases" would become a new task of the Committee in the coming year.

The Committee has finally adopted a working definition of "acceptance" (see below), and is exploring the possibility of commissioning studies on the identification of discrimination, a move proposed by the UNAIDS in one of its latest publications. With the support of its members, it is clear that CPA is swiftly moving from theories to action! - *the editor*

## Acceptance

The working definition of acceptance is to "consider people living with HIV/AIDS as ordinary members of the community, who are accorded equality, compassion and mutual respect". ☼



## Task Forces in Action

THE *AIDS Prevention and Care Committee* (APCC) met on 14 September and resolved to support the formation of two new task forces - one on *sex workers and clients* and the other on *women*.

The meeting also received reports from the other task forces. The exercise of developing strategies in specific settings is in progress. Members noted that it would be another few months before a draft document can be available from each group. ❁

## Durban

OVER two months have lapsed since the International AIDS Conference was last held in Durban, South Africa. The subject was in the agenda of both *AIDS Prevention and Care Committee* (APCC) and the *Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS* (CPA). Miss OC Lin reported her experience in the Conference at the last APCC meeting. Professor CN Chen, chairman of CPA, led the discussion in the other Committee, and was joined by Mr Mak Hoi-Wah, Miss Anna Wu and Mr Tony Pang, who were also present at the Conference.

For those who had attended the Conference, the forum was truly impressive. Despite the difference between Hong Kong and South Africa, the Conference had provided a forceful stimulus for members to reflect on our local situation, and to identify gaps which would need to be addressed in the coming years. ❁

## Dissolution of Core Teams

AT the 3rd meeting of *Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS*, members agreed to dissolve the four core teams formed earlier this term to examine the strategy for promoting acceptance.

A summary report was presented by each of the core teams - *Education, Legal/Ethical Issues, Collaboration with Stakeholders, and Partnership with Professionals*. These reports highlighted strategies which could be pursued in due course. There were overlapping areas, for example, the role of the media, and the means of promoting awareness. The meeting requested the Secretariat to synthesize the findings for the production of a composite report. ❁

AT the last meeting of the *AIDS Prevention and Care Committee* (APCC), Miss Bella Luk represented the *Subcommittee on Media and Publicity* in outlining the plan for the coming World AIDS Day.

The meeting noted that there would be projects launched by individual agency (NGO or government units) itself or in collaboration. A new API (announcement of public interest) will be produced, following suggestion of the Task Force on Travellers. This would mean a collaborative effort of NGOs, with the support of the Government's Information Services Department.

Agencies planning activities for the upcoming World AIDS Day 2000 are urged to forward the information to the Secretariat. A joint calendar / leaflet is being considered so as to better inform the public of the events. ❁

**AIDS Hotline 2780 2211** *Information, Counselling  
HIV Testing*

## Vaccine Theory of AIDS Origins

EDWARD Hooper's theory shook the scientific community when he first postulated that HIV was transmitted through the use of contaminated polio vaccine some 40 years ago in Africa. His description is published in his book "The River".

Hooper accused the researchers then of using chimpanzee kidney cells in the manufacturing process. The theory has become even more attractive as chimpanzee is now thought to be the source of HIV-1.

The story went to the press again last month when the Royal Society in London hosted a meeting on the subject. Scientific evidence was presented which simply refuted Hooper's claim. In summary the evidence comprises (a) oral polio vaccine was not administered in the same geographical region as that of the origin of HIV; (b) the common ancestor of HIV existed before 1940; (c) monkey rather than chimpanzee cell was used in the polio vaccine experiments; and (d) the remaining vaccine samples



In the Press

## Surveillance update

**Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics  
updated 30 June 2000**

		HIV (AIDS)
<b>Gender</b>	male	1204 (425)
	female	242 (50)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Chinese	1004 (366)
	non-Chinese	442 (109)
<b>Transmission</b>	heterosexual	821 (301)
	homosexual	286 (91)
	bisexual	74 (26)
	injecting drug use	28 (8)
	blood/bl products	68 (18)
	perinatal	11 (4)
	undetermined	158 (27)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1446 (475)</b>

did not contain HIV or the related SIV.

Similar to the question *Is HIV the cause of AIDS?* this new round of debate was emotionally charged and has

somewhat diverted the attention of the scientific and international community from what urgently needs to be done - halt the HIV epidemic! ❄

### *Millennium Summit*

**In September 2000, more than 150 world leaders gathered at the UN Headquarters in New York for the Millennium Summit. At the Opening, the Secretary-general pledged to promote health and combat HIV/AIDS. He challenged the world to cut the rate of HIV infection in young people by 25% by 2015.**

Among the resolutions made at this important gathering were

"...to have, by then (2015), halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity"; and

"...to provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS" ❄

## Letter



**THE Secretariat has received a letter from Mr Graham Smith, co-chair of the Community Planning Committee, in response to the questionnaire at the back of the last issue of *ACA Newsfile*.**

**Mr Graham Smith writes:** THE questionnaire lists five steps in a programming process from strategy development to programme implementation and asks us to divide the steps up between APCC (*AIDS Prevention and Care Committee*) and CPC (*Community Planning Committee*). I think there is a problem with this task for two reasons: Firstly, it misses out key-players in the picture which could also take up some steps; NGOs,

the Government AIDS Unit and the AIDS Trust Fund are obvious omissions. Secondly, the process steps as laid out don't cover the important step of allocating funding according to strategies and programme priorities that are determined. If the issue of funding allocation is not figured in the picture we will continue with a situation of having a vacuum between planning and implementation.

With regard to the role of CPP (community planning process) I would like to point out that it is by definition a planning committee. Under its current remit it can therefore only be responsible for strategy development and/or programme prioritization. The committee as it stands lacks both the capacity and their resources to take up a larger role than this. If there is to be any discussion of expanding this role I think it should include all members of the CPC.

A third concern I have with regard to the relative roles of the two committees is

their links with the overall committee structure. The APCC has a direct formal link with the ACA whereas the CPC does not. In the last 12 months there has been a significant change in the composition of the APCC with the inclusion of vulnerable community members in many of its task forces. This I see as a strengthening both of the committee and of the interface between government and the community. My concern is that if community participation is shifted entirely to the CPC and the government continues to keep CPP at its current distance from the ACA it will appear that the government is deliberately trying to keep vulnerable communities out of the picture. I think the best solution to this would be to strengthen formal links between ACA and CPC. ✿

*THE Secretariat has so far received only a small number of responses to the questionnaire. As a new initiative, community planning demands our attention. You are invited to offer your views by completing the survey and/or writing to us. We believe that more discussion would benefit our future programmes. - the Editor*

THE Secretariat has received a copy of each of the following two study reports titled "*HIV antibody testing among male commercial sex networkers, men who have sex with men, and the male general population in Hong Kong*", and "*HIV antibody testing among the Hong Kong mainland Chinese cross-border sex networking population in Hong Kong*".

The reports had been prepared by the Community Research Programme on AIDS, headed by Dr Joseph Lau. Interested members may approach Dr Lau or the Secretariat for the report(s) ✿

