

⌘ Calendar⌘

XLIV Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30 pm 3 October 2003

XXIX Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30 pm 30 September 2003

XIV Meeting of the AIDS Prevention and Care Committee (APCC)

5:30 pm 3 December 2003

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

2:30 pm 27 November 2003

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The 44th Meeting

Everything is back to normal again quickly after the rumours of the recurrence of the SARS turned out to be a false alarm last month. The meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS is back on track again and its 44th meeting will be held on 3 October 2003 as scheduled. There are three main items on the agenda (a) Treatment and care of HIV-infected haemophilia patients in Hong Kong, (b) Planning the Core Indicators set for monitoring Hong Kong's AIDS programme and (c) Development plan for the Expert Panel on HIV Infection of Health Care Workers for 2004 to 2006. The Council will also endorse two information papers (a) Recommended ethical principles regarding the use of assisted reproduction in HIV infected individuals and (b) Proposed meeting schedules for the ACA and its committees under AOB.

More inside stories will be revealed at the next issue of the Newsfile.

✧ Newsflash ✧

ACA Evening Gathering

The ACA has entered into the second year in its fifth term. As there are quite a lot of new members who have just joined the ACA and its committees, the ACA Chairman is going to organize an evening gathering to allow all members to know each other and chat at a leisure environment. Light refreshments will also be served. The evening gathering will be held from 5:30 pm to 7:00pm on 17 October 2003 (Friday) at the Red Ribbon Centre. Invitation letter will be sent to all ACA and committee members separately.



A New ACA Newsfile Editorial Board

Starting from this issue, the new Editorial Board is charged with the publication of the Newsfile. The new Editor Board has brought in more new talents to keep members abreast of the most up-to-date activities of the ACA and its Committees. The composition of the Editorial Board is as follows:

Chief Editor: Dr SS LEE

Members: Dr KH WONG, Dr CW CHAN, Kenny,
Dr KT CHAN, Michael, Dr WY WAN
and Dr CK LEE, Krystal

Executive Editor: Mr MK WONG

Assistant Editor: Mr FC LEUNG, Alfred

Technical Support: Ms YP WONG, Catherine
and the Red Ribbon Centre

If readers have any new suggestions about the Newsfile, please contact us at our website:
aca@dh.gov.hk

Back to the Community Again

The ACA Chairman, Dr Homer Tso, has accepted Prof. Joseph Lau's invitation to chair a seminar on HIV Prevention for the Male homosexual population in Hong Kong -- Research and Intervention. The seminar is to be held on 18 October 2003 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at the Function Room, 2/F, Hospital Authority Building, 147B Argyle Street, Kowloon. The Center for Epidemiology and Biostatistics of CUHK, the AIDS Concern and the Chi-Hang Foundation jointly organize it.

The topics to be discussed include "Needs assessment for HIV prevention in the male homosexual population in Hong Kong", "It's not just about condoms", and "Cross-border risk behaviours and prevention programmes". Participation is free and all interested parties are welcome to attend. ⌘

In and around Hong Kong

HIV Surveillance Network for the Pearl River Delta

Hong Kong and Guangdong agreed on 8 September 2003 to exchange information on all their notifiable diseases for the first time under a landmark five-point agreement, a milestone in cross-border cooperation. Under the five-point agreement, the two sides will report notifiable diseases to each other every month; enhance cooperation in scientific research; set up an HIV surveillance network for the Pearl River Delta; alert each other on special outbreaks and strengthen professional exchanges.

Under the initiative of Dr SS LEE, Hong Kong Guangdong and Macau will soon set up a taskforce on HIV and the first AIDS database for the region. ⌘

Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics (updated 30 June 2003)

		HIV		AIDS	
		total	/ Q2 2003	total	/ Q2 2003
Gender	male	1715	40	554	10
	female	401	9	87	4
Ethnicity	Chinese	1469	36	501	11
	non-Chinese	647	13	140	3
Transmission	heterosexual	1199	20	426	11
	homosexual	406	11	111	2
	bisexual	97	3	30	0
	injecting drug use	56	2	10	0
	blood/bl products	68	0	20	0
	perinatal	15	0	6	0
	undertermined	275	13	38	1
TOTAL		2116	49	641	14

NOTE: The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. Q2 refers to the period from April to June 2003. The "AIDS" number is a subset of the "HIV numbers" and the two should not be added.

SOURCE : Special Preventive Programme, Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR Government

CPA Meeting

The Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS met at its 11th meeting on 4 September 2003 at the Red Ribbon Centre. There were three main items on the agenda (a) does a risk of HIV transmission justify a break in patient confidentiality, (b) rehabilitation and people living with HIV/AIDS, and (c) ethical guidelines regarding the use of assisted reproduction.

Under item (a), members had better understanding of the effect of criminalization of HIV transmission in the UK and the public health act in Australia. They were, however, inclined to accept that the partner notification system might be the most suitable system for Hong Kong where the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was low.

For (b), members agreed to probe into the actual needs of people living with HIV/AIDS and a Working Group was set up to look into the problem further. The Working Group, with Mr MAK Hoi-wah as the convener, would meet again on 17 October 2003 at the Red Ribbon Centre.

Regarding (c), members were aware that there was no pressing demand for assisted reproduction by HIV infected

individuals. To make preparations for the advent of the first request, the Secretariat will compile a set of recommended ethical principles for the use of assisted reproduction in HIV infected individuals for the endorsement of the ACA. ⚡

APCC Meeting

The 13th meeting of the APCC was held on 19.9.2003. There were two main items on the agenda: (a) Introduction to the Community Health Organization for Intervention, Care and Empowerment (CHOICE) and (b) Support Fund for HIV/AIDS Patients and their Families. At the start of the meeting, the Chairperson extended a warm welcome to the three new members, who had been nominated by the HKCASO to join the APCC, and Ms LING Yau-mei, Magdalene, who had replaced Mr KWOK Chung-kai, Peter, as the representative of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau.

What made the presentation under item (a) so compelling was the insider's first hand story. Apart from the background, mission and objectives of the CHOICE, Ms Shara HO, the manager of the newly established organization, revealed to members that

- The number of people entering the sex industry was on a steady rise because of the recent economic downturn;
- Many younger sex workers had little knowledge about STI/HIV. Their attitude towards condom use varied with prices. Clients who offered to pay more could dispense with the use of condom;
- Men at late 20 to early 40 were more willing to use condom to reduce the chance of infecting

STI/HIV;

- There were more than 50 karaoke/internet bars in the Mong Kok District and most of the young sex workers working there were drug users too.

Much to her relief, Ms HO was pleased to tell members that at least 4 stray young girls working in Karaoke bars listened to her counselling and lived a normal life again.

For item (b), Mrs Alice LEUNG of the SWD conveyed a clear message to members that the SUPPORT FUND was there to help HIV/AIDS patients and their families. As the objective of the fund implied, it was to provide temporary financial assistance to HIV/AIDS patients and their families. Although applicants were required to undergo a means test, the medical social workers responsible for processing applications would treat each and every application sympathetically. Depending on the amount of the assistance, cash could reach the hand of the applicant as early as 3 days and no more than 7 days.

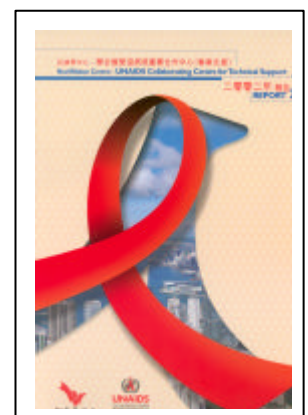
The next APCC meeting was scheduled for 3 December 2003. ⚡

R R C Report

The Red
Ribbon

Centre has just published its 2002 Annual
Report. Interested readers may visit its website:

www.rrc-hk.com



In Memoriam

Jonathan Mann 1947 - 1998

September 2003 marks the fifth anniversary of the tragic deaths of Jonathan M. Mann and his wife Mary Lou Clements in a plane accident. The plane was then taking them to Geneva, to the World Health Organization and UNAIDS, where they had dedicated all their life to fight the global AIDS pandemic through development of international health strategies deeply rooted in human rights protection.

Dr Mann had worked closely with many AIDS workers in Hong Kong. In 1993, Dr Mann visited Hong Kong and delivered a thoughtful presentation at the Health Services Panel of the Legislative Council. He was also the honorary advisor of our Community Charter on AIDS in 1994, and supported our local programmes through useful advice and discussions. In the months before his death, he had agreed to be the advisor for re-launching of the Community Charter.

Five years have passed. In a world where the disease still claims its heaviest toll among the most deprived, the anniversary of the untimely death of this pioneer in fighting the AIDS global pandemic reminds the public health community of the importance of global solutions to global problems. In the field of AIDS, an expanded health, social and economic international strategy firmly grounded in human rights is still much needed. ❧ ❧ ❧



Staff members of SPP bidding farewell to Dr Margaret Chan at the dinner party organised by the Department of Health on 20 August 2003.

