

⌘ Calendar ⌘

XLVI Meeting of the
Advisory Council on AIDS
(ACA)

2:30 pm 2 April 2004

XXXI Meeting of the
Scientific Committee on
AIDS (SCA)

2:30 pm 30 March 2004

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

5:30 pm 19 March 2004

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

2:30 pm 4 March 2004

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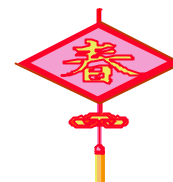
Council Meeting
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The 45th ACA Meeting



The Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS held its 45th meeting on 9 January 2004. There were four major items on the agenda: (a) An update on the HIV situation in Hong Kong with focus on areas of concern; (b) A review of progress of targets established in the Recommended HIV/AIDS Strategies for Hong Kong 2002 to 2006; (c) The introduction of the methadone clinic universal HIV urine testing programme; and (d) World AIDS Day 2003.

The ensuing paragraphs attempt to give an account of the meeting.

For (a), members were told that in the first three-quarters of the year 2003, 157 HIV infections and 37 AIDS cases had been reported compared to 260 and 53 respectively recorded in the previous year. While the outbreak of the SARS explained the dip in the first half of 2003, it appeared that an upsurge would be likely for the final quarter of the year. Members also learned that there were three areas of concern. (I) While the population seroprevalence remained low at <0.1%, the possible increase in the number of reports would be a matter of concern. (II) Sexual transmission remained an important risk of HIV infection in Hong Kong. The recent disturbing trend of new HIV reports especially in Chinese MSMs and elderly men would need to be addressed. (III) Although the absolute number of HIV infected drug users remained small, their engagement in risk taking behaviours through sex or the drug use might pose a threat to the community. A more detailed account is given on page 8.

As regards (b), members were given to know the findings of the review. It was reassuring that most of the targets listed had been met partially or in full. There were only two targets falling behind with the schedules. Members agreed to make an effort to put the second community planning process in place and to explore means to incorporate HIV in public health and clinical training in Hong Kong.



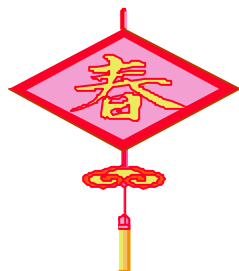
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On the subject of methadone clinic universal HIV urine testing programme (MUT) under (c), members were conveyed the results of a pilot programme run from July to September 2003 in three methadone clinics at Sham Shui Po, Homantin and Aberdeen. All (2456) attendees were offered the test and 74% (1817) had the tests performed. Nine cases were tested positive with a seroprevalence rate of 0.50%, a slightly above the range of seroprevalence as predicted in previous rounds of unlinked anonymous screening (UAS). A full MUT programme rolling out on 1 January 2004 in all methadone clinics in the territory followed the initiative. Members were given to understand that the MUT would not be the solution to the gap of surveillance in hard-to-reach populations and the coverage of only 70% would be another matter of concern. Members were also alerted that the future population risk to HIV in Hong Kong would be affected by the increasing human mobility between Hong Kong and the Mainland. An "infection rate gradient" between cities in the Pearl River Delta Region with the lowest in Hong Kong, higher in Shenzhen and the highest near the boundary between Guangdong and Guangxi supplied traces of clues.

Regarding (d), members were presented the features of the joint project, collaboration between Hong Kong and the Mainland, to mark the World AIDS Day 2003. The project included the production of a short educational film, a theme song and a concert cum preview of the educational film at the Capital Stadium in Beijing on 27.11.2003.

The next ACA meeting will be held on 2 April 2004.



XV International AIDS Conference Bangkok 11-16 July 2004

The Conference Vision is that the XV International AIDS Conference links community and science to galvanize the world's response to HIV/AIDS through increased commitment, leadership and accountability.

The Conference Theme is "Access for All".

For more details, please visit "www.aids2004.org"



Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics (updated 30 September 2003)

		HIV total / Q3 2003		AIDS total / Q3 2003	
Gender	male	1760	45	561	7
	female	412	11	89	2
Ethnicity	Chinese	1511	42	508	7
	non-Chinese	661	14	142	2
Transmission	heterosexual	1226	24	434	8
	homosexual	414	8	112	1
	bisexual	97	0	30	0
	injecting drug use	62	6	10	0
	blood/bi products	68	0	20	0
	perinatal	15	0	6	0
	underdetermined	290	18	38	0
TOTAL		2172	56	650	9

NOTE: The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. Q3 refers to the period from July to September 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

A Chronicle of Dr Shen Jie's Visit to Hong Kong



Dr Shen Jie attended the Scientific Meeting of Universal Antenatal HIV Testing Programme in Hong Kong at the Princess Margaret Hospital on 4 January 2004



Dr Homer TSO, the ACA Chairman, hosted a reception dinner for Dr Shen Jie at the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine on 4 January 2004



Prof. LAU Yu-lung and Prof. LAM Tai-hing exchanged views with Dr Shen Jie during her visit to the University of Hong Kong on 5 January 2004

Dr Shen Jie attended the SCA Special Meeting at the Red Ribbon Center on 5 January 2004



(Dr Shen Jie is the Director of the National Center for AIDS Prevention and Control and is also the Special Adviser of the Scientific Committee on AIDS) → → → → →

An Update on the HIV Situation in Hong Kong- with focus on Areas of Concern

In the first three-quarters of the year 2003, 157 HIV infections and 37 AIDS cases were reported to the Department of Health, compared to 260 and 53 respectively recorded in the previous year. The dip in the first half of 2003 was a result of the SARS outbreak, which had discouraged members of the public to seek health services. Among the 157 newly reported HIV cases, 123 (78.3%) were male. The male to female ratio was 3.6:1. Overall, 69.6% (1511/2172) of the HIV reports were Chinese.

Sexual transmission remained the commonest reported risk factor for HIV infection locally. Among the 157 new HIV reports, 109 (69.4%) were transmitted sexually: 76 (48.4%) heterosexually and 33 (21.0%) homosexually or bisexually. It was noted that the proportion of heterosexual transmission gradually decreased from its highest of 70% in 1994 to 48.4% in 2003. The proportion of homosexual and bisexual (MSM) transmission has slowly crept up from its nadir of around 10% in 1998 to 21% in 2003.

There has been an increase in number of HIV reports among **injecting drug users** in recent few years. In 2002, 10 (3.8%) HIV cases reported were injecting drug users. In 2003, it was 8 (5.1%) for the first three-quarters

A gradually decreasing

trend in the number of **AIDS reports** has been observed. In fact, the annual reported number of AIDS cases has been stable at 60-70 since 1996, the year when highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) was introduced. There were a total of 53 AIDS reports in year 2002 and 37 in the first three-quarters of 2003

The primary AIDS defining illness (ADI) patterns of the reported AIDS cases remained similar to previous years. *Pneumocystic pneumonia* (PCP) continued to be the single most important ADI and accounted for 15 (40.5%) AIDS cases in 2003.

Molecular epidemiology is an important tool to identify any common source of HIV infection in Hong Kong. Genetic clustering was found only in a few MSM pairs, perinatal infections and a number of non-Chinese injecting drug users over the past years. There has been no genetic clustering identified among the reported infections in 2002.

Apart from the new infections reported in young men, some 10 to 15% of the newly reported HIV infections occurred in middle aged men at or above the age of 55.

Areas of Concern

A total of 260 HIV

infections, the highest figure ever obtained for a year, were reported in 2002. This was followed by a dip in the first half of 2003, and a rebound is expected for the last quarter. Seroprevalence studies, however, have not indicated a significant increase in HIV seropositivity among at risk groups or the general population. While the population seroprevalence remained low at <0.1%, the **possible increase in the number of reports** is a matter of concern.

Sexual transmission, especially among Chinese men, remains an important risk of HIV infection in Hong Kong. Although the results of molecular epidemiology have not indicated any common source of infection locally, the recent disturbing trend of new HIV reports would need to be addressed, especially in Chinese MSMs, and elderly men.

Though the absolute number of **HIV infected drug users** has remained small, a consistent percentage (<1%) is tested positive. Knowingly, some infected drug users might not have shared needles. Their engagement in risk taking behaviours, either through sex or drug use in future, may pose a threat to the community. A strategic approach in the management of HIV infected drug users is needed to ensure that the situation is under control.

(This passage is an extract from the ACA Discussion Paper D-10/02-05)