

⌘ Calendar ⌘

XLVIII Meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA)

2:30 pm 8 October 2004

XXXIII Meeting of the Scientific Committee on AIDS (SCA)

2:30 pm 21 September 2004

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

6:30 pm 10 September 2004

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

2:30 pm 2 September 2004

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Web site: <http://www.aca-hk.com>



47th ACA Meeting

The Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS held its 47th meeting on 30 July 2004 and the following main items on the agenda were discussed:

- (a) A report on Hong Kong's participation in the XV International AIDS Conference
- (b) Construction of the first set of Core Indicators for monitoring Hong Kong's AIDS Programme
- (c) Study on the needs of HIV Infected Haemophiliacs in Hong Kong: An administration report on the assessment of stresses and coping strategies in people living with Haemophilia and HIV Infection in Hong Kong
- (d) Planning of a new role for the Scientific Committee on AIDS

Members were also furnished with the following two information papers:

- (a) UNAIDS 2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic – executive summary
- (b) The face of HIV/AIDS in China

*~ Details of the
discussions will be
covered at the next issue
of the Newsfile.*

Hong Kong's Participation in the XV International AIDS Conference



The **International AIDS Conference** is the largest and most important forum on AIDS on a global level. It was held annually between 1985 and 1994, then biennially ever since. While the conference is owned by the International AIDS Society, it is co-hosted by national agencies and supported by international organizations.

The XV International AIDS Conference took place from 11 to 16 July 2004 in Bangkok. This was the second time that the Conference was held in an Asian country – the last time being Yokohama in 1994. The XV International AIDS Conference was organised by the International AIDS Society (IAS) and the Thai Ministry of Public Health as the local Host. The co-organisers of the Conference were UNAIDS, three international community networks: ICW, ICASO, GNP+ and TNCA, a conglomerate of Thai AIDS NGOs. The Conference was made up of scientific and cultural programmes.

Government, public services, advisory bodies and non-governmental organisations participated actively in the Conference. They were

- ✦ Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health
- ✦ Hospital Authority – Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital.
- ✦ Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS
- ✦ Red Ribbon Centre Management Advisory Committee
- ✦ Hong Kong AIDS Foundation
- ✦ AIDS Concern
- ✦ St John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre

The total number of **abstracts** submitted for the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok 2004 was around 10000. There were

five tracks for the submissions: Track A: Basic Science (681); Track B: Clinical Research, Treatment and Care (2198); Track C: Epidemiology and Prevention (2214); Track D: Social and Economic Issues (2724); Track E: Policy and Program Implementation (2370). Accepted abstracts were presented in three formats: oral, poster and published abstracts.

Over 80 **skills building workshops** were offered at the XV International AIDS Conference. Each workshop incorporated one or more specific categories crafted by the Skills Building Working Group. AIDS Concern delivered one skill-building workshop titled “How to turn an AIDS-denying commercially operated sex venue into a safer sex supporting place”.

A number of **exhibit booths** were allocated free of charge to non-governmental, non-profit making organisations. As the space was limited, selection was made by an international panel convened under the Community Program Committee. St John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre ran the booth “Our Church has AIDS: Anglican Communion Responds Worldwide”.

As in previous years, Hong Kong AIDS Foundation hosted a **Satellite Meeting** for networking Chinese communities around the world. This year the theme was “Facing challenge jointly”. The meeting was co-organized by the Global Chinese AIDS Network, Chinese Association of STD & AIDS Prevention and Control, and China STD & AIDS Foundation.

A **special workshop** was hosted by UCLA to discuss HIV/AIDS situation in Asia, featuring presentations by public health professionals from various Asian countries. Dr Michael Chan of the Special Preventive Programme introduced the situation in Hong Kong.

The Asian Harm Reduction Network conducted a **parallel session** “Building Bridges: breaking the barrier between harm reduction and traditional services”. Dr Krystal Lee of the Red Ribbon Centre gave a presentation on the Centre's role in social marketing and participated in the discussion.

To be continued...

...The **2004 AIDS Film Festival** was a special event developed by the Cultural Programme of the Conference Secretariat and TVE Asia Pacific. This was a non-competitive event for showcasing top international documentary and docu-drama productions on HIV/AIDS produced during the past three years. Two submissions from Hong Kong were screened (a) Love under the Sun – a musical jointly produced by Red Ribbon Centre, Ministry of Health and RTHK; and (b) Compilation of Spots (a collection of APIs) produced by the Government Information Service in the last two decades. Selected films were shown at the Conference site and other cinemas in Bangkok. Richard Gere officiated at the gala opening and premiere of “A Closer Walk” by Director Robert Bilheimer on 12 July 2004.



CHP Controller, Dr PY Leung (on the right), ACA Chairman, Dr Homer Tso (in the middle), and Dr Michael Chan (on the left) attended the XV IAC.



World Drug Report 2004

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has recently published the World Drug Report 2004. Some major figures are extracted below:

- Approximately 185 million people (3% of world population or 4.7% of the population aged 15 to 64) have abused drugs in the previous 12 months. Cannabis is the most widely used substance (close to 150 million people), followed by amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) (about 30 million people, primarily MEMA, amphetamine and 8 million for ecstasy). Slightly more than 13 million people use cocaine and 15 million use opiates, including some 9 million who take heroin.
- UNAIDS and WHO have estimated that by the end of 2003, there were 34 to 46 million people living with HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that there are approximately 13 million injecting drug users worldwide, among which 3.3 million are from S & SE Asia.
- Over a 10-year period the quantities of illicit drug seized have increased as a whole, with the strongest increase for ATS.
- Global illicit production of opium has remained stabled at around 4,000 to 5,000 metric tons since early 90s, but has become increasingly concentrated in Afghanistan (vs. opium poppy cultivation continues to decline in Myanmar and Laos in SE Asian region).
- The cannabis market remains thriving and buoyant, with increasing consumption in South America, expanding markets in Western and Eastern Europe and also Africa. Two thirds of global seizure over 2001-02 period took place in North America, which is probably the largest market. Its production is globally dispersed, with Morocco (22%), Pakistan (15%) and Afghanistan (13%) were the major sources of cannabis resin seized globally (global production of resin is estimated to be around 5,100 tons), while Mexico (34%), US (23%) and Nigeria (11%) accounted for the major seizure of cannabis herbs (global total for 2002 being 4,741 tons).
- In terms of demand for treatment, opiate presents the most serious drug problem, accounting for 67% of drug treatment in Asia, 61% in Europe and 47% in Oceania. Methamphetamines is the main problem drug in SE Asia while cocaine troubles American continent.

For details, surf the following websites:

Vol 1 (Analysis): http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR_2004/volume_1.pdf

Vol 2 (Statistics): http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR_2004/volume_2.pdf

CPA Meeting

The 14th Meeting of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CPA) was held on 19 July 2004 at the Red Ribbon Centre. There were two main items on the agenda: (a) A reappraisal of the recommended ethical principles on partner counseling and referral for HIV infected individuals in Hong Kong; and (b) Review on social and support services to people with HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong. The last item on the agenda was a PowerPoint presentation by Dr Krystal LEE on her participation in the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok.

As regards (a), members reappraised the recommended ethical principles according to two papers, one for discussion and the other for information. As a follow-up to the suggestion to add the fourth principle made at the last meeting, all four revised principles were embodied in the discussion paper:

- i Principle ONE: PCRS should be conducted by health professionals who are taking care of HIV infected patients. Appropriately conducted PCRS is beneficial to the HIV infected individuals, their partners and the community.
- ii Principle TWO: Approaches to provide PCRS is diversified with different pros and cons. Health professionals should work with the patient to decide on the most appropriate approach.
- iii Principle THREE: The conduct of PCRS should always comply with the local law and professional code and conduct.
- iv Principle FOUR: PCRS Protocol should be developed by individual health service taking care of HIV infected patients. Advice from relevant authority should be sought in handling difficult cases.

Members reached a consensus about the underlying considerations for making these principles. However, they had a heated discussion about the controversy over when (within a certain time frame) and how (with or without patient's consent) health professionals to inform partners of HIV infected patients of the need to have a blood test for HIV antibody. The secretariat was given a hard time to

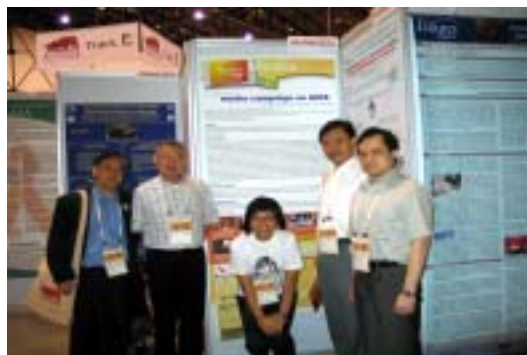
make an attempt to reconcile the need for making a set of recommended principles with concern for patient's confidentiality.

For (b), Mr MAK Hoi-wah, the Chairman of the AIDS Social and Support Services Working Group briefed members on the preliminary findings of the 'Review on social and support services to people with HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong'. Definitions and classifications of support and social services used in the review were adopted from a previous study in 1994 with the title "A review of services provided to people with HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong". Among the 20 different services provided for HIV/AIDS patients, five were identified as inadequate. They were

1. Funeral service
2. Special concern for HIV infected haemophiliacs patients
3. Peer counselling and self help activities
4. Residential care for the disabled
5. Employment and vocational training

The working group had yet to make its final recommendations in the final report.

Regarding the PowerPoint presentation, Dr Krystal Lee shared her experiences of the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok with members. She was fascinated by the grandeur of the conference, the culture diversities and the variety of activities. She also highlighted the premiere of the musical film "Love under the sun" at the 2004 AIDS Film Festival on 14 July at Lido Cinema in Bangkok.



The next CPA meeting will be held on 2 September 2004.