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Schedule

- 60th ACA Meeting on 5 October 2007
- 9th CFA Meeting on 18 December 2007

Website: <http://www.aca-hk.com>

60th ACA Meeting Agenda

The 60th ACA meeting will be held on 5 October 2007 (Friday) at 2:30 pm at the DH Conference Room, 21/F Wu Chung House, Wan Chai. There will be three main items on the agenda:

1. Report on Epidemiological Investigation of a Large Cluster of HIV-1 Subtype B Infections in Hong Kong
2. HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong – Hitting a Moving Target-*Building Effective and Sustainable Responses to an Evolving Epidemic* (Report written by Dr. Tim BROWN, Senior Fellow, East-West Center)
3. Hong Kong Joint World AIDS Day Campaign 2007

★★Interested readers may watch for the next issue of the ACA Newsfile for more details★★

ACA Chairman’s Trip to Siem Reap, Cambodia

Professor Chen Char Nie, in his capacity as Chairman of Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS, was invited to speak at a 3-day regional workshop on the ‘Practical approaches to the effective treatment of drug addiction in Asia’. Dr Raymond Ho, Senior Medical Officer in Department of Health’s Special Preventive Programme, accompanied Professor Chen to this educational meeting, which was held in Siem Reap Cambodia from 13-15 September 2007. Last year, Dr Clive Chan joined Professor Chen to a similar workshop held in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.

The main objectives of the regional workshop included:-

- Review emerging trends and responses to drug use in the Asian Region
- Review pharmacological treatments of opioid dependence
- Review effective methods for monitoring treatment progress
- Review effective treatment approaches for alcohol dependence
- Review psychopharmacology of recreational drugs including methamphetamine
- Consider governance requirements for safe and effective pharmacological treatments of opioid dependence
- Examine techniques for interviewing and care planning
- Examine techniques for mentoring and staff supervision.

...../to be continued

ACA Chairman's Trip to Siem Reap, Cambodia...

The meeting was officially declared opened by the Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia. There were delegates from Australia, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, the Republic of Laos, Mainland China and Taiwan, and the host country Cambodia. Most of the delegates are psychiatrists by profession, but also included physicians, public health doctors, academics, general practitioners, non-governmental organization workers and anti-drug stakeholders.

Professor Chen delivered his talk on the opening day on 'Psychiatric care for HIV/AIDS patients in Hong Kong'. Having been an honorary psychiatric consultant for DH since the early 2000s, Professor Chen presented his study on the mental health profile of HIV/AIDS patients visiting Integrated Treatment Centre at Kowloon Bay. He was also invited by the organisers to share his experiences with delegates on the methadone programme in Hong Kong in a 2-hour workshop. Having championed for the expansion of harm reduction programmes for injecting drug users for over 20 years, Professor Chen was pleased to witness the introduction of methadone treatment programmes in many neighbouring countries and the Mainland in recent years. Currently, our local hosts are also contemplating the introduction of methadone treatment programme in Cambodia.

The workshop participants share their experiences in different approaches to drug addiction treatment, but it becomes evident as the discussion goes on that methadone treatment programme is an affordable, accessible and safe form of harm reduction approach to improve the social functional capacities of heroin drug abusers enrolled in the programme. With a high retention rate, the methadone programme could help its attendees to remain in jobs, foster family and social relationships and reduce their health risks to serious infectious diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C. While it is heartening to see the introduction of methadone clinics in many countries, we must be cautious that methadone clinics may fail to deliver their harm reduction and social objectives if the treatment programme has stringent admission criteria and poor coverage.

Siem Reap is small charming gateway town to the world famous heritage the Angkor temples. Thanks to those attractions, Siem Reap has transformed itself into a major tourist hub. Siem Reap nowadays is a vibrant town with modern hotels and architectures. Despite international influences, Siem Reap and its people have conserved much of the town's image, culture and traditions. While the 3-day workshop was tightly scheduled with plenary sessions of lectures and experience sharing workshops, there were also cultural evenings organized for the delegates to sample the Cambodia culture, traditions and cuisine.



The Eighth CFA Meeting

The two main items discussed at the Eighth CFA meeting on 11 September 2007 was Community-based Risk Behavioural and Sero-prevalence Survey of Female Sex Workers in Hong Kong (CRISP) and World AIDS Day 2007

On CRISP, Members noted the main findings of the survey. It was a community based surveillance involving five NGOs in the field providing HIV preventive services for female sex workers. The overall HIV prevalence of female sex workers was found to be 0.19%. However, the survey did not access some types of establishments in sex works such as night clubs and call girls. All parties concerned agreed that it was a worthwhile exercise and enhanced the understanding of the HIV epidemiology situation in female sex workers. It would be important to monitor the trend of HIV prevalence in female sex workers. The CRISP survey also served as a good collaborative model between DH, NGO and academia. Members agreed that CRISP should be repeated at 2-yearly intervals because it was a labour intensive exercise.

As regards World AIDS Day 2007, Members learnt of the proposed activities to be organized in the Joint World AIDS Day Campaign 2007. Following the recommendations made by the working group formed under CFA on the theme and the activities of the joint World AIDS Day Campaign in August, Members agreed to use “promote acceptance” and “anti-discrimination” as the main theme of World AIDS Day. The major activities of the joint WAD campaign would include three components:

- (a) Distribution of red ribbons - different organisations including schools and offices would be invited to distribute red ribbons to the public in early November. A message card attached would inform members of the public the theme of the campaign as well as the meaning of the red ribbon.
- (b) Holding a ceremony on WAD - a ceremony would be held on 30 November 2007. The proposed rundown of the ceremony would include signing on a giant T-shirt by various AIDS and mainstream NGOs, premiere of new API featured by Miss Miriam Yeung in promoting the acceptance of people living with HIV, and brief introduction of the AIDS prevention work currently conducted by various AIDS and mainstream NGOs.
- (c) Publication of a calendar – The calendar would be produced to show all activities conducted by different organisations on or around WAD.

Members were also aware that the working group came up with an advocacy idea. It was proposed for the consideration of HKCASO to pledge the support of District Council candidates in stopping AIDS and promoting acceptance in the coming DC election in November 2007.

The next CFA meeting
will be held on 18 December

HIV researches presented at a local scientific meeting

At the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Hong Kong College of Community Medicine held on 8 September, 2007, research findings on a variety of areas pertinent to HIV and public health in local settings were presented. An oral free paper depicted the changing epidemiologic pattern of HIV/AIDS cases in Hong Kong reported from 2001 to 2006. The needs of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) who attended public services and specifically the mental health profile of PLHA under the care of the government HIV clinic were examined in two separate posters. Furthermore, a poster reported a pilot trial to implement rapid HIV testing in labour ward at a public hospital, for tightening

mother-to-child HIV prevention. Lastly, a study looked at risk factors associated with HIV infection in attendees of government sexually transmitted disease clinics.



We look forward to more HIV researches contributing to AIDS response as well as the wider public health agenda in Hong Kong.



Network of Hong Kong Based AIDS Programme on Mainland China and in Neighbouring Countries

The Red Ribbon Centre will organize a sharing forum on 6 October (Saturday) from 14:00 to 16:30 at its Activity Hall at 200 Junction Road East, Kowloon.

The objectives of the forum are to provide a platform for Hong Kong based NGOs with HIV/AIDS projects in China and neighbouring countries to share their work and experience, to enhance communication and collaboration among them, and to provide an opportunity for individuals with interest in AIDS prevention and care to learn more about the field.

ACA Chairman will speak at the opening of the forum and serve as the moderator.

