

## IN THIS ISSUE WE HAVE



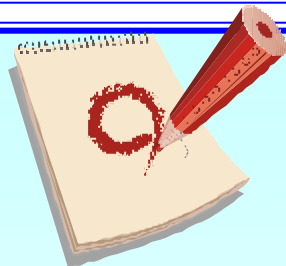
### 14th CFA Summary

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### ~ Calendar ~

**ICAAP 9 to be held in  
Bail from 9-13 August  
2009**

**The 15th CFA Meeting  
on 22 Sept 2009**

**The 68th ACA Meeting  
on 9 Oct 2009**

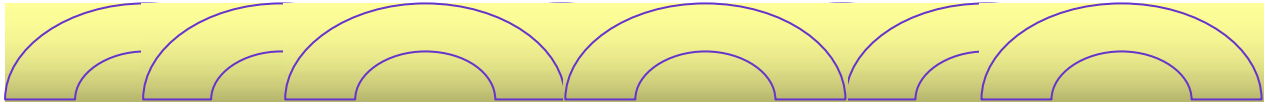
## 14th CFA Meeting

The 14th CFA meeting was held on 3 July 2009 . There were three major items on the agenda. A summary of the discussion at the meeting is shown below:

### (I) Draft Quality Assurance Guidelines for Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Services in Community Settings

The draft was endorsed by the Forum with minor modifications. Regarding implementation, it was noted that ACTS/RRC would provide support for capacity building and training for frontline workers delivering VCT services. It was proposed that experiences on the handling of difficult cases could be shared at regular intervals with SPP nursing staff. On the issue of checking clients' particulars, the Forum agreed that flexibility should be given to organizations running their services in different settings. Regarding the quality of HIV rapid test kits, the Forum noted that DH would not be a position to recommend individual brand(s), but the test kits would soon come under the regulatory framework for medical devices. It was agreed that the actual implementation of the quality assurance guidelines would be revisited after one year.

To be continued....



## **(II) Principles of Informed Consent, Discussion, and confidentiality Related to Diagnostics HIV Test**

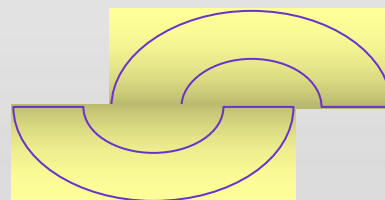
The Forum discussed the paper and raised the following areas of concern:

- a) There was no guidance on whether parental consent was required for children/minor who sought HIV testing service. Members opined that requiring parental consent would deter most adolescents from testing. It was clarified that in current medical practice, parental consent for HIV test should apply only in the context of infants and children. The Forum recommended that the paper should state more clearly that professional judgement on the adolescent maturity and understanding may be taken into account in determining whether parental consent was necessary before testing.
- b) With regard to client confidentiality, the Forum expressed concerns over the level of security in electronic clinical records and stressed the need for safeguard against inadvertent disclosure.
- c) For involuntary HIV testing of source after occupational exposure, it was noted that protection from HIV transmission in the healthcare setting should rely on universal precautions, supplemented by PEP. In extreme cases necessitating involuntary testing of source, a health care proxy would be appointed to safeguard the interests of the source.

Overall, the Forum welcomed the issuance of these Principles and agreed that there should be wide consultation of all relevant stakeholders including Hospital Authority, professional bodies, and the general public before they are adopted.

## **(III) Syphilis Awareness Campaign in MSM**

The Forum noted the aim and content of the multi-pronged nine-month (June 2009 – February 2010) Campaign. The designs of the movie-theme posters, giveaway items such as coasters, postcards, tin can, and tissue box were felt to be very creative and attractive to the target population of young MSM and bisexuals. These would be posted and distributed in gay bars; saunas, other venues visited by MSM, selected non-MSM specific venues, and through activities of NGOs as well as during the Hong Kong Lesbian Gay Film Festival. Regarding the possible increase in workload of syphilis/HIV tests, it was noted that suitable resources would be deployed to alleviate the additional workload. The Forum noted that posters to be posted in non-MSM specific venues would be carefully selected but commented that complaints should still be expected from some sectors of society. However the Forum expressed support and appreciation of the DH's bold step forward to really address the culture of MSM in this Campaign. The Australian experience showed that MSM community had little knowledge about syphilis, and the Forum noted that information booklets and website would be available as part of this Campaign to address the knowledge gap.



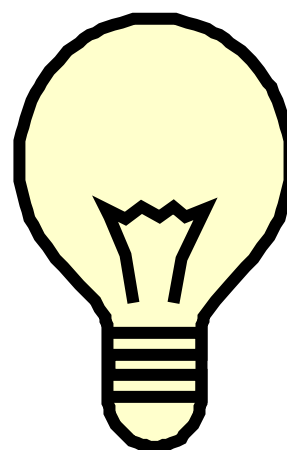
## Meeting with NGOs on 7 July 2009



◆ A joint letter dated 22.6.09 from the four NGOs tasked with HIV prevention and caring for sex workers, namely Midnight Blue, Action for Reach Out, Ziteng and Sisters Association emailed to ACA Secretariat expressing their concern about confiscation of condoms by the Police as evidence to prosecute sex workers. While they tried to encourage sex workers to carry condoms with a view to promoting safer sex and preventing HIV infection, they considered that it would make their effort abortive and was not in line with the policy of encouraging the use of condoms to promote safer sex.

◆ In fact, the issues of, among others, using confiscated condoms and lubricants as evidence to prosecute sex workers was raised at the Legislative Council Meeting on 24 January 2007. The Secretary for Security responded that 'the Police will not make an arrest solely on the ground that items such as condoms or lubricants are seized from the person concerned'. Mr Charles WONG, an ACA Member and the Secretariat staff met the representatives from NGOs on 7 July 2009 and the following issues were discussed at the meeting:

*To be continued...*



## Meeting with NGOs on 7 July 2009

## Continued ...Meeting with NGOs on 7 July 2009

- The primary evidence of prosecution was soliciting and operating premises for immoral purposes. As such, for prosecution purpose, it must be established that the person had soliciting for immoral purposes or there was proof of organized crimes in operating prostitution. It was emphasized that condoms, lubricants and transactions records were used by law enforcement officers as circumstantial evidence for prosecution only.

- There were frontline AIDS workers reported that there is a deeply-rooted belief among sex workers that the possession of a condom will be used as evidence in court in support of the charges related to prostitution. The NGOs consider that this belief counteracts very much their efforts in encouraging the use of condoms to promote safer sex.
- Further enhancement in communication between frontline police officers and NGOs could be a possible way out.

◆ ACA discussed the issue at its meeting held on 10 July 2009 and believed that good understanding and communication between frontline police officers and NGOs vital for reinforcing the Secretary for Security's open statement. To curb the growth of AIDS epidemic in Hong Kong, it is important that NGOs and sex workers understand that frontline police officers do not make an arrest of sex workers suspected of engaging in prostitution solely on grounds of possession of condoms. After deliberation, it was agreed that the Chairman of ACA would write on behalf of the ACA to reflect the views on the matter and explore how best to take the issue forward.

The logo for the 9th International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (ICAAP 9). The text "ICAAP 9" is rendered in a large, stylized, blue serif font with a slight 3D effect, set against a yellow background. The entire logo is enclosed in a double-bordered orange frame.

AIDS Trust Fund has approved funding to sponsor two ACA members namely Dr CHEN Zhi-wei and Mr TO Chung-chi, to attend the 9th ICAAP to be held from 9-13 Aug 2009 in Bail, Indonesia.