

Editorial Board

Executive Editor: Mrs Ellen LAU, ACA Secretariat



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The COUNCIL welcomes Dr CHAN Hon-ye, Constance, JP, Director of Health, to be the new Vice-Chairperson of the Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS; and gives a vote of thanks to Dr LAM Ping-yan, JP for his contribution in the past and wishes him a happy retirement.

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HIV infection of health care workers

The Expert Panel on HIV Infection of Health Care Workers (Panel) set up under the Department of Health serves to assess and advise on the need of job modification of HIV infected health care worker and lookback investigation. Attending doctor of HIV infected health care worker is required to make anonymous referral to the Panel, which will be examined on a case-by-case basis with all information treated in strict confidence. As of June 2012, the Panel has assessed twenty five cases.

The Panel considers it necessary to keep health care professionals abreast of the subject of HIV infection and health care workers, and would like to stress herewith three points -

(a) the importance of adherence to standard infection control practices to

minimize the risk of transmission of blood-borne pathogens including HIV in health care settings;

- (b) the need for attending doctor of infected health care worker to submit referral for assessment; and
- (c) the health care workers' duty of care to patients and the need to seek HIV testing, care and treatment as appropriate if they have reason to believe they have been infected with HIV or at risk of infection.

For referral or questions relating to the Panel, one can contact the Panel Secretary, Dr. KH Wong, at 3/F, Wang Tau Hom Jockey Club Clinic, 200, Junction Road East, Kowloon, HONG KONG, Tel: (852) 3143 7289; Fax: (852) 2780 9580.

A Summary of the 78th ACA Meeting held on 20 April 2012

Implementation and Monitoring of the Recommended HIV/AIDS Strategies for Hong Kong 2012-2016

Members were briefed on the proposed framework for ACA to monitor and advise on the implementation of its Recommended HIV/AIDS Strategies for Hong Kong 2012-2016. In brief, a consolidated summary of key action plans should be compiled, updated regularly and made widely accessible to relevant service providers, funding agencies and advisory bodies etc. The summary should include information on –

- (a) priority action areas;
- (b) related recommendations;
- (c) priority communities and subgroups (if any);
- (d) types and components of project/programme;
- (e) scale (i.e. expected no. of clients, attendee or audience);
- (f) period of the projects/programmes; and
- (g) geographical information.

Members also noted that ACA might wish to define deliverables to be achieved within the current three-year term and deliberated on the following two cross-cutting issues -

- (a) discussion with the Judiciary system on whether condom used as circumstantial evidence in sex-work related prosecution could also be regarded as a mitigating factor for public health reason; and
- (b) establishing mechanism for better alignment for the priority areas between ACA and the Council for ATF.

Furthermore, an annual review would be conducted to monitor the progress and assess the effectiveness of old and new measures in the coming four years, and commented that eventually the information could help identify gaps and guide future planning.

Report of the 24th Meeting of the Community Forum on AIDS

Members were briefed on the major discussion of the 24th CFA Meeting held on 22 March 2012 (and a summary of this CFA Meeting was given in the ACA Newsfile issued in May 2012).

Revisiting HIV infection and the health care workers

Members noted that the HIV Infection and Health Care Workers: Recommended Guidelines (the Guidelines) were first formulated by ACA in 1994 and the Guidelines were further revised in December 2003. An Expert Panel on HIV Infection and Health Care Workers (Expert Panel) was first appointed in 1994 and then reappointed in 2004. Since 2004, the Expert Panel had been chaired by Prof. TH LAM, with membership expanded (from two) to four, including one lay member from outside the health professions. Up to the end of 2011, the Expert Panel had received a total of 19 referrals of a variety of health professionals (including doctors, dentist, nurse and allied health). Of these 19 referrals, 4 cases were recommended to undergo job modification and no lookback was recommended.

Members discussed the major issues arising from a recent referral in January 2012 -

- (a) HIV testing and diagnosis;
- (b) Confidentiality and disclosure of HIV status;
- (c) Referral to and monitoring of adherence to Panel recommendation on job modification;
- (d) Notification of referrals to professional councils;
- (e) Limitations on performance of exposure prone procedures (EPP);
- (f) Panel role and function; and
- (g) HIV stigma and other negative impressions.

The meeting generally agreed that a review of the existing Guidelines was necessary and appropriate. During the process, input would be sought from the Expert Panel on international developments and recommendations in the field (including the areas of controversy/debate).

Familiarization Visits to HIV NGOs

Members noted that visits to the Caritas Youth and Community Service, Chi Heng Foundation, Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers (SARDA), Rainbow of Hong Kong, St John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre and A-Backup took place in February 2012 and this ended the series of visits to NGOs after debut of this term.

more about the 78th ACA Meeting held on 20 April 2012

Update on HIV/AIDS Epidemiology in Hong Kong 2011

Members were informed that 438 HIV (record-high) and 82 AIDS cases were reported in 2011. Cumulatively, DH had received 5,270 HIV reports and 1,267 AIDS cases as of 2011. The number of HIV reports increased by about 13% this year after a drop in the previous two years. The number of HIV tests done by the Public Health Laboratory Centre, which was the largest HIV testing laboratory in Hong Kong, was maintained at around 80,000 tests per year.

Members were also briefed on the major recommendations made by Dr Tim Brown for the future HIV situation in Hong Kong, as follows –

- (a) Sustain the current successful programs addressing HIV risk among local sex workers and their clients and injecting drug users (IDU);
- (b) Improve the understanding of the origin of HIV infections among heterosexual males and IDU and consider ways of raising public awareness of the need to take protective measures when having sex or using drugs outside of Hong Kong;
- (c) Continue support for HIV prevention efforts among MSM and set a target of getting condom use above 80% to turn the corner on the epidemic; and
- (d) Develop a set of common community indicators and feed into an overall central evaluation of the effectiveness with a view that prevention efforts in Hong Kong could be sustained and expanded to address the remaining gaps.

ACA Annual Report (2009/10)

The Chinese translation of the ACA Annual Report (2009/10) had been cleared by Prof CHEN Char-nie, JP (the previous ACA Chairperson) and printing of the report would tentatively be completed by the Government Printer in early June 2012.