



NEWSLETTER – volume 8 – July 2009

APPG Meetings

Integrating TB and HIV care in Sub-Saharan Africa

This meeting, co-organised by COMDIS and TARGETS research consortia, sought to provide examples of how TB and HIV services can be implemented on the ground. With the growing incidence of TB-HIV co-infection, particularly in Africa, it is vital that joint services are effectively provided. Parliamentarians and development experts heard from Malcolm McNeil of DFID on the work his Department is undertaking on TB-HIV co-infection. Dr Kerry Bailey (COMDIS) and Dr Kwambe Shanaube (TARGETS) also provided experience of how they had successfully provided services for patients in Africa.

Current progress towards MDG 6 in Latin America

The APPG's on TB, AIDS, Malaria and Latin America came together to examine the current situation with regards to the three diseases in Latin America. Expert speakers from the World Health Organisation, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and International HIV/AIDS Alliance spoke of the need to further support prevention and control activities in the region. Whilst the region as a whole is making strides against disease, this masks the wide variations between, and within, countries – especially in vulnerable population groups.

TB in London

This meeting was arranged as follow up to a number of past activities the APPG has carried out focused on TB in London. Dr Simon Tanner from NHS London and Nick Relph (PCT lead for TB in London) described the activities that are currently taking place in the capital to control TB. These included the establishment of a London TB Commissioning Group and Unit and Pan-London Clinical Reference Unit. The uncertain future of the mobile x-ray unit and Find and Treat team was discussed as well as the need for effective prison services. Surinder Tamne of the London TB Workforce Group shared her experiences of TB in New York where pioneering services dramatically halted and reversed the incidence of TB. It was concluded that whilst much is being done, increased activities and support from local PCTs is vital if the situation is to move forward.

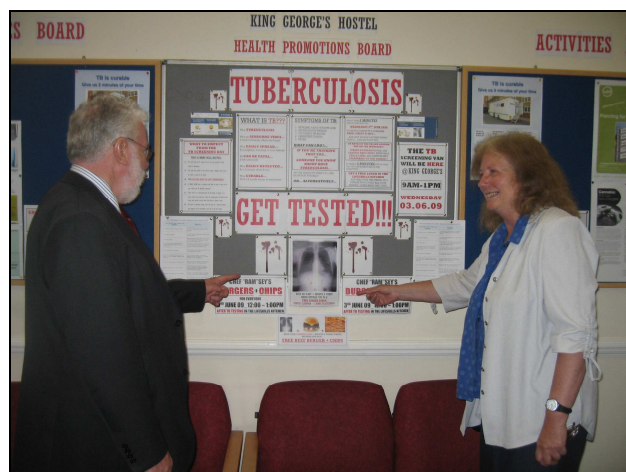
TB vaccines

The current BCG vaccine has had no apparent impact on reversing the global TB epidemic. After 85 years, a new vaccine is needed. Parliamentarians and experts heard from Dr Helen McShane from Oxford University and Peg Willingham from Aeras on the work they are doing in respect to a new TB vaccine. Encouragingly, a new vaccine is currently undergoing phase IIb trials.

Parliamentarian Visits

Mobile X-Ray Unit screening in Westminster

Three members of the APPG joined Find and Treat staff at a screening of two hostels in Westminster. The Mobile X-Ray Unit (MXU) is an important service for active case finding in hard-to-reach populations at increased risk of TB. Parliamentarians met MXU staff, hostel staff and clients and toured the St George's Hostel to learn more about how health issues are promoted among residents.



MPs look at a display at King George's Hostel encouraging residents to get tested at the MXU

Damien Green MP

The APPG recently organised a meeting for Damien Green MP to tour his local TB service in Ashford, Kent. Mr Green met with local staff to learn more about how TB impacts on his constituency and the challenges that the TB service faces in providing an efficient, appropriate service for local residents.

David Evennett MP

In June the APPG organised another visit for an MP to his local TB service. David Evennett MP met with staff of Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Greenwich to discover how his constituents are affected by TB.



Mr Evennett with staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Mr Evennett MP was informed of the basics of TB epidemiology and the necessities of a first class functioning TB service. He was especially interested in learning about the BCG policy that is in place and who is eligible for vaccination.

Annual Report

The APPG recently launched their first Annual Report. The Group has been involved in many activities in the past year focused on both TB in the UK and globally. Correspondence with policy makers has continued, eight meetings have taken place, multiple visits have occurred and 51 parliamentary questions asked on TB. The Annual Report seeks to consolidate these activities and inform the work that is needed in the year ahead. The APPG has a number of objectives that were agreed upon its inception in 2006. Progress against these objectives is measured aimed at highlighting areas in need of focus. The report can be found at: http://www.appg-tb.org.uk/documents/APPG_Annual_Report.pdf

Future activities:

The British Thoracic Society, TB Alert and APPG are repeating their 2007 survey of PCTs to examine local focus and response on TB. The survey will be sent to PCTs in the next few weeks with results released at the BTS Winter Conference in December.

The APPG is currently organising meetings and events for the Autumn-more details to follow soon.

Joint report of the Royal College of Nursing, British Thoracic Society and APPG

July saw the launch of the report "*Turning UK TB policy into action: the view from the frontline*". The report included results of two separate but interconnected surveys of RCN and BTS members implemented in early 2009. The surveys sought to gain opinions from frontline staff on the state of the current response to TB in the UK and to understand the barriers that they face in successfully preventing and controlling TB.

The report found that whilst much progress has been made more effort is needed in some areas if effective services for TB are to be developed. Results included: only 44% of BTS respondents stating that their service had admin support, 47% of RCN respondents stating that they did not have the necessary skills in their service to treat patients with complex social needs and a lack of joint care between TB services and their paediatric and GU colleagues.



Julie Morgan MP, BTS and RCN speakers at the report launch

Recommendations of the report include the call for national standards on TB to ensure accountability at the local level, clearer guidelines on the role of TB nurses in giving routine BCG, a call for increased attention on how consultant time for TB is calculated, sufficient support for TB services outside of London and implementation of guidelines on the management of co-infected and paediatric TB patients.

The report can be found at http://www.appg-tb.org.uk/documents/RCN_APPG_BTS_report_final.pdf

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Tuberculosis

For more information visit: www.appg-tb.org.uk

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