



NEWSLETTER – volume 4 – April 2008

APPG warns that PCTs are failing in fight against TB

A new report by the APPG on Global TB and the British Thoracic Society (BTS) has shown that Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are failing to implement Government guidelines on TB at a time when 70% of PCTs predict that the number of TB cases in their region is set to rise.

101 PCTs out of 152 responded to the survey sent out by the APPG and BTS, the body which represents specialists in respiratory disease. Only half had appointed an individual to be responsible for leading action on TB, while 41% said they were not actively raising awareness of the disease.

Julie Morgan MP said: "Our findings are deeply worrying. The Action Plan was published almost four years ago, and yet clearly very little has been achieved." She added: "TB is clearly not getting the attention it deserves. There should therefore be a properly-funded national TB awareness campaign, tailored to local circumstances, aimed at healthcare professionals as well as the general public."

Visit the APPG's website to read a copy of the report '*Putting Tuberculosis on the Local Agenda*'.

WHO reports highest rates of drug-resistant TB to date

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) has been recorded at the highest rates ever, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) report released in February. The report presents findings from the largest survey to date on the scale of drug-resistance in tuberculosis.

WHO estimates there are nearly half a million new cases of MDR-TB - about 5% of the total nine million new TB cases - worldwide each year. The report also found that extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB), a virtually untreatable form of the disease, has been recorded in 45 countries.

In response to these findings, the APPG called upon the UK Government to do all it can to help prevent further transmission of drug-resistant TB and to equip countries to correctly diagnose and treat all strains of the disease.

Latest TB figures

Globally, there were 9.2 million new cases of TB in 2006 and 1.7 million deaths. An estimated 0.5 million cases were MDR-TB and 0.7 million TB patients were co-infected with HIV. (Source: WHO)

Provisional data for the UK estimates that there were 8,496 new TB cases in 2007 suggesting that incidence in the UK remains stable but high. The highest proportion of cases - 39% - were reported in London. (Source: Health Protection Agency)

Footballer Figo makes stopping TB his goal

Recently appointed Stop TB Ambassador Luis Figo visited London on March 17th to launch a new global campaign to raise awareness about TB. A press event was held at a secondary school in Hackney where local children were invited to participate in a penalty shoot-out with the Portuguese football legend. Banners promoting the campaign were displayed around the UK in March and April.



UN Special Envoy to Stop TB, Jorge Sampaio speaks to the UK media with Luis Figo and APPG co-Chair Nick Herbert MP

APPG presented to RCN Tuberculosis Nurses Forum

Julie Morgan MP gave the keynote address at this year's Royal College of Nursing TB Nurses Forum highlighting the role of the APPG and the Group's commitment to TB services in the UK. Julie urged TB nurses to share their expertise and experience with the APPG and to get involved in efforts to raise the profile of TB among their policymakers and local community.

National Knowledge Service – TB Pilot

The National Knowledge Service (NKS) TB Pilot was set up to ensure that sources of information and knowledge on TB are brought together for healthcare professionals, patients and their carers, enabling everyone to base their decisions about treatment, prevention and management of TB on the best current knowledge.

The Health Protection Agency has been coordinating the NKS on TB since April 2005 in collaboration with the NHS, Department of Health, charities and voluntary organisations. The NKS on TB provides a single portal of information for TB and has been referred to in the NICE guidelines of 2006 as a source of quality information. Information resources produced include those focused on substance misuse and TB; TB and prisons; guidance for staff working with the homeless and people seeking asylum; and TB and children.



Information about TB for use in prisons (left).

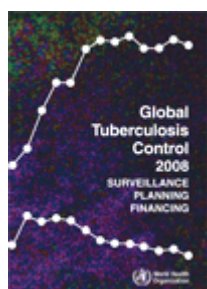
All resources can be accessed from the HPA website: www.hpa.org.uk

House Magazine and Lilly partner to raise awareness of MDR-TB in Parliament

On 12th March, *The House Magazine* in association with pharmaceutical giant Lilly hosted a parliamentary roundtable on multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). The participants heard from Paul Thorn, TB activist and former MDR-TB patient, about his experience of TB treatment in a London hospital, after which there followed a general discussion on how to confront drug-resistant tuberculosis. Amongst the attendees were co-chairs of the APPG on Global TB Nick Herbert MP, Julie Morgan MP and Andrew George MP; Mario Raviglione, Director of Stop TB at the WHO and Lilly Senior Vice President Alex Azar.

The House Magazine released a special supplement on tuberculosis to mark World TB Day on March 24th. The supplement included an open letter to Gordon Brown from Sidney Taurel, CEO of Lilly, and articles by Nick Herbert MP, International Development Minister Gillian Merron MP, Sheila Davie, Executive Director of RESULTS UK, and Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership, amongst others.

Findings of latest WHO report presented to APPG



Dr. Katherine Floyd from WHO presented the findings of WHO's latest annual *Global Tuberculosis Control Report* at an APPG meeting on March 17th. The new information documents a slowdown in progress in diagnosing people with TB. The report highlights two aspects of the epidemic that could further slow progress on TB: drug-resistance and TB/HIV co-infection. The report also documents a

shortage in funding. Despite an increase in resources, especially from the Global Fund and some middle-income countries, TB budgets are projected to remain flat in 2008 in almost all of the countries most heavily burdened by the disease.

Health advocate warns of MDR-TB threat in India

On March 18th Indian health advocate Dr. Bobby John spoke at a joint meeting of the APPG on Global TB and the Indo-British Parliamentary Group. Dr. John was invited by Dr. Ashok Kumar MP, Chair of the Indo-British Parliamentary Group after visiting India in 2007 to learn about the impact of TB.

India has the highest TB burden in the world. Annually, there are around 1.85 million new TB cases equating to one-fifth of the total global TB incidence.

Great progress has been made in India with the national DOTS programme now covering 100% of the population. The UK is a key supporter of India's TB programme and funds the cost of anti-TB drugs in India through the Global TB Drug Facility.

However, Dr. John warned that greater attention needs to be paid to maintaining the quality of TB services in India and that the rapid expansion of free anti-TB drugs creates the potential for drug-resistance if TB drugs are not administered properly. The increasing prevalence of MDR-TB also highlights the need for better diagnostic facilities throughout the country.

British XDR-TB case is 'wake-up call' about resurgence of disease

The APPG on Global TB has warned that the diagnosis of a case of Extensively Drug-Resistant TB (XDR-TB) in the UK is a "wake-up call" to British politicians and the public about the global resurgence of tuberculosis.

The APPG was responding to reports that a patient diagnosed with XDR-TB is being treated in a Glasgow hospital.

XDR-TB is a form of TB caused by germs resistant to all of the most effective first- and second-line anti-TB drugs, and emerges through mismanagement of MDR-TB treatment. Once created, XDR-TB can spread from one person to another. Because XDR-TB is resistant to drugs, treatment options are seriously limited and the disease is virtually untreatable. It is therefore vital that TB control is managed properly.

In a press statement, Nick Herbert MP said: "Most people think that TB is a disease of the past, but in fact it is a pandemic of the present. With more concerted global action, most of the 1.7 million people who die of TB each year could be treated relatively easily and cheaply. But the latest drug-resistant forms of the disease present a serious new challenge."

Overcoming barriers to TB treatment and diagnosis in China and Bangladesh

Evidence from research projects in China and Bangladesh shows that involving diverse partners has a positive impact in the fight against TB.

Two Principle Investigators from the COMDIS Research Programme Consortium gave presentations to the APPG on Global TB on April 1st.

Dr Zafar Ullah outlined the importance of involving the private sector and garment industries in TB control in Bangladesh in order to reach the most poor and vulnerable groups.

Dr Xiaolin Wei spoke of the challenges of improving TB control in China including the management of TB in rural-to-urban migrants and promoting an operational guideline for frontline TB doctors.



Dr Zafar Ullah, Julie Morgan MP and Dr Xiaolin Wei

Peers debate elimination of TB

Baroness Crawley responded to a question from Baroness Sharples on March 31st about the actions being taken by the UK Government to help eliminate TB as a global public health problem by 2050.

Visit the APPG website to keep track of all questions and debates relating to TB from both Houses.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Tuberculosis

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