



Conclusions & Recommendations:

IIIrd Regional Meeting
on

TB/HIV Interprogrammatic Collaboration Activities

(San Salvador, El Salvador, 24–26 April 2006)

Conclusions

1. During the meeting, participants were introduced to the *Global Plan for TB Control 2006–2015* and to the new *Stop TB Strategy*, with its respective components including TB/HIV, as well as the Regional Strategic Plans for TB and HIV/AIDS.
2. Significant progress has taken place in the Region in the implementation of TB/HIV collaborative activities and surveillance of co-infection, in accordance with the recommendations of the IInd Regional Meeting for TB/HIV held in Mexico City in 2004.
3. Epidemiological surveillance was identified as an area still insufficiently developed, which as a result impedes knowing the real impact that HIV has on TB control, as well as the impact that TB has on HIV morbidity and mortality.
4. Participants discussed the methodology of epidemiological surveillance of TB/HIV co-infection, pointing out that it would be ideal to apply routine HIV testing for TB patients; however the methodology will have to be stratified in each country, in accordance with its epidemiological situation and the availability of economic and technical resources.
5. A presentation was made on the experience with applying rapid HIV tests, showing the advantages for systematic surveillance of co-infection among TB patients; however, it was observed that there are limitations related to cost, in comparison with other tests widely used in the Region.
6. Participants were presented the experience of El Salvador with implementing TB/HIV collaborative activities, through field visits to four health-care centers of varied complexity in San Salvador and the vicinity. All the groups agreed that there was advanced implementation of such collaborative activities, pointing out the participation of trained and committed multidisciplinary groups, in addition to standards integrating co-infection issues that are being strictly applied in the places visited. However, the high dependency on external financing for these activities is a concern.
7. Some countries of the Region were offered a chance participate in pilot testing for new TB registries that include aspects related to co-infection, multi-drug resistance, and case registry.
8. Participants discussed the conceptual and operational basis of HIV counseling and testing, in order to then apply them in their TB programs. The draft of the Guide for the Ministry was presented, along with HIV/AIDS test kits for TB programs; the final version of the draft will be reviewed by the participants from the countries and by the PAHO Regional teams from the TB Program and HIV/AIDS Unit.

9. The National TB and HIV/AIDS Programs countries prepared preliminary joint action plans to strengthen their interprogrammatic collaboration activities.

Recommendations

1. Continue and expand collaborative activities between TB control and HIV/AIDS programs; strengthen interprogrammatic partnership.
2. With reference to epidemiological surveillance, insofar as it is possible, for the countries to systematically monitor the presence of HIV in all patients, and to intensify case-finding for TB in all patients with HIV.
3. In countries with a concentrated and/or incipient epidemic, for them to stratify their methodology of epidemiological surveillance in accordance with the impact of the HIV epidemic on the different geographical regions.
4. In countries with access to rapid HIV testing, that they utilize this as a part of their comprehensive care scheme for patients with TB.
5. Provide comprehensive primary care for patients with tuberculosis, for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA), and to persons co-infected with both diseases, including as basic activities that all patients with TB be offered counseling and HIV testing and that case-finding activities be conducted among all PLHAs for active TB.
6. At the recommendation of the Regional Program, that the countries utilize the preliminary action plans developed at this meeting as input for their national strategic mid- and long-term planning, following the guidelines in the Global Plan and the Regional Strategies for TB and HIV/AIDS.
7. That monitoring and evaluation of TB/HIV collaborative activities be carried out jointly by the two programs.
8. At the request of the participating countries, that PAHO and WHO become more involved in the process of identifying sources for technical and financial resources to facilitate the implementation and expansion of TB/HIV interprogrammatic collaborative activities.
9. That the problem of TB/HIV be brought up at the *IVth Latin American Forum for HIV and STIs* to be held in Argentina in June 2007, with follow-up on the implementation and expansion of interprogrammatic collaborative activities.

