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Policy Comment: Are You Aware of the New Monitoring and Evaluation Framework?

In the early days of the epidemic, managers had little information about how to measure the success of their interventions beyond tracking HIV/AIDS data. This is no longer the case. But some Latin American and Caribbean countries still use different sets of indicators for HIV prevention, AIDS care and STI control. The publication "National AIDS Programs: a guide to monitoring and evaluation," by PAHO, WHO, UNAIDS and other organizations, suggests a common M&E framework, based on the best standards and experiences. Is this being considered in your country? You can download the publication from http://www.paho.org/spanish/hcp/hca/antiretrovirals_HP.htm. The Spanish version will be available soon, both in the UNAIDS and in the PAHO web pages. Regional consultative group suggests antiretroviral therapy.

Experts in Antiretroviral Therapy From 15 Countries Were Invited by PAHO to Elaborate a Regional Protocol for ARV Therapy

The two-day workshop (Washington, 26-27 July) recommended a "simplified" protocol, based on a reduced list of drugs. The group also elaborated a criteria for initiating treatment,

based on CD-4 and viral load counts. The experts took into consideration experiences both from countries that are already making the drugs available in a larger scale, like Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico, and from countries that may be able to provide them in the future, like the Dominican Republic. They also made suggestions about drug control and distribution. After a review by the participants, the recommendations will be available for consideration and adaptation by the countries. The results will also be presented in a series of regional forums, including the Central American Workshop on Access to Antiretrovirals (Panama, 6-7 August) and the XV Meeting of Central American Health Ministers

PAHO and GCTH to Strengthen Cooperation and Communication

PAHO's Regional Program on AIDS and STI and the Horizontal Technical Cooperation Group (GCTH) will make a proactive effort to strengthen their cooperation and improve communications. This was one of the outcomes of the visit to Washington of Dr. Marco Antonio Alvarenga, Secretary of the CGTH. Dr. Alvarenga also met individually with the staff of the HIV/AIDS and other PAHO programs, to discuss specific cooperation on epidemiology, care, prevention, communications, tuberculosis and the revolving fund. Dr. Fernando Zacarias and Dr. Alvarenga agreed to contact each other regularly to exchange information about activities.

Countries Improve AIDS Reporting

As of December 2000, a cumulative total of 1,184,651 AIDS cases were reported in the Americas (up from 1,088,053 in May 2000). Since 1986, a total of 603,925 deaths have been reported (up from 513,522 and mostly due to revised data from the US and Brazil). This information, presented in the new edition of "AIDS Surveillance in the Americas", should be interpreted with caution, as the proportion of AIDS cases reported varies significantly from country to country, depending on the quality of their surveillance systems. A positive note: only 12 countries did not report their data for the previous three years, down from 17 countries in the May 2000 report. The report was sent to all PAHO offices and can also be found in the Internet.

Honduras: PAHO and Swedish Cooperation Launch Project on Secondary Prevention

In the last years there has been a tendency of the bilateral aid agencies to focus on primary prevention projects. A new initiative launched in July shows that this may be changing now. With a US\$ 300,000 grant from the Swedish cooperation and technical cooperation from PAHO, the Ministry of Health of Honduras will strengthen the care, education and living conditions of HIV/AIDS orphans and affected families in San Pedro Sula. This is the region worst hit by the epidemic in Central America, with prevalence among pregnant women of 3-4%. San Pedro Sula and surroundings account for half of all the AIDS cases in the country. Another unique feature of the project is that it will be jointly implemented by PLWA organizations, the municipality, the church, NGOs and the private sector. After an 18-month pilot phase the project may be extended to the national level.

HIV/AIDS Concerns Pan-American Military

HIV/AIDS is a concern of the military from the Americas. The II Pan-American Congress of Military Medicine, (Isla Margarita, Venezuela, 3-8 May) dedicated a full day to the subject. Dr. Fernando Zacarias, head of PAHO HIV/AIDS Program, made two presentations.

AIDS in the Caribbean Makes Headlines

Several articles about AIDS in the Caribbean appeared in the press in the last couple of months, including a front page story on the Washington Post and an article of the Journal American Medical Association (June 20). The Word Bank published the study "HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, Issues and Options", with data from the WHO/UNAIDS system and considerations about the Bank's role. PAHO's magazine, "Perspectives in Health", dealt with the subject on its last issue. The front-page story "Confronting AIDS in the Caribbean: Major New Efforts Underway" is one of the most comprehensive accounts of the efforts underway to control the epidemic in the Caribbean. You may find it useful to email the story web address to interested audiences in your country. Check on

http://www.paho.org/English/DPI/Number11_article3.htm (English) or

http://www.paho.org/Spanish/DPI/Numero11_articulo3.htm (Spanish).

For the Record: Global AIDS and Health Fund Launched

G8 leaders meeting in Genoa on July 20 officially launched a \$1.2 billion fund to fight AIDS malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's told countries that this effort would require \$7 billion to \$10 billion annually. More than 200 people took part in the consultations to create the fund, which will be based in Brussels. A transitional working group (TWG) will be established, with a mandate of six months, including UNAIDS, WHO, foundations, donor and developing countries (among them, Brazil).

New Grants for Pediatric Research in Developing Countries

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation is seeking to extend its support of leadership in pediatric HIV programs to developing countries through a new program called the International Leadership Award. Applicants may apply for support of up to US 450,000 to create effective pediatric HIV/AIDS research and implementation programs including those addressing epidemiology, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, treatment of infected mothers and infants, development of national policies or strategies to combat pediatric HIV, assessment of the economic impact of disease and its prevention, or to help train additional in-country and regional scientists. Deadline: September 20, 2001. Check on

http://www.pedaids.org/fs_grant_apps.htm

Updating Focal Points info

We have published a list of HIV/AIDS-STI focal points in the PAHO Intranet. Please check to see if your information is updated: <http://intranet.paho.org/HCP/HCA/FocalPoints.doc>.

Regional Program on AIDS and STI in the Media

Interviews: Dr. Zacarías (Telemundo), (Boston Business Radio), Dr. Mazín, (Le Nouvelliste, Haiti), Dr. Hermida (30 Latin American journalists in Buenos Aires).

The purpose of this bulletin is to share information on the efforts of PAHO professionals involved in the response to AIDS/STI. It is not an official document of the Organization. To add or remove your name from the bulletin's distribution list, contact sida@paho.org. Use this email address to contribute articles for publication. We ask the PAHO AIDS/STI focal points to send us information on events, strategies, concerns, and needs. PAHO is the regional office of WHO in the Americas and a co-sponsor of UNAIDS.



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