



PAHO HIV E- Newsletter

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GAN's Meeting Monitors Results of ARV Price Negotiation.

Andean countries and Mexico achieved a decline from 15% to 55% in the price of first line ARV after the II round of ARV price negotiations, compared with the prices obtained in the 1st round. The findings come from a preliminary report presented at the second meeting of the ARV Negotiation Monitoring Group (GAN, for its Spanish acronym) carried out in Washington in June.

However, the report developed by the GAN, with PAHO technical support, shows that high prices persist for several medicines, particularly those from research and development companies.

The report points out the need for monitoring the negotiations in the countries as a shared responsibility of government, international organizations, and civil society. It also highlights the need to improve the coordination among drug regulatory bodies, National HIV Programs and the areas that define policies for the purchase of ARV.

The meeting was attended by PAHO staff members and representatives from ORAS, UNAIDS, people with HIV, GCTH, Agua Buena, and FIOCRUZ. Participants discussed the need to identify strategies for the III round of negotiations, to be held in November and coordinated by ORAS with PAHO's support.

During the meeting, FIOCRUZ presented a project to monitor the ARV price negotiations in Latin America, which consists of a methodology in which countries self evaluate progress toward the implementation of prices. The objective is to better prepare countries for future negotiations, both at regional and national levels. The project, that was already validated and is in its pilot test stage in Peru, will soon be implemented in the Caribbean and Honduras.

ORAS presented the terms of reference for a study aiming at characterizing the institutional market for ARV medicines in the Andean region, as contribution for the forthcoming III round of negotiations.

More information: http://www.paho.org/spanish/ad/fch/ai/antiretrovirals_HP.htm

New Evidence for Prevention through Male Circumcision

PAHO is planning to promote an expert consultation in the second half of 2007 to review studies conducted in the region and explore the possibility of recommending a large scale intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The initiative draws from epidemiological and population studies in African countries, which provide evidence of the reduction of HIV transmission in circumcised men. According to some of these studies, circumcised men have to up to 60% protection against HIV and other STI. However, it is necessary to develop more comprehensive studies in order to determine the real benefits, in accordance with epidemiological evidence, as well as the possible risks associated with complications for lack of hygiene during the surgical intervention. Another concern is the possible desinhibition effect, which could increase risky behavior and reduce the use of other protective measures by those who feel safe as a consequence of circumcision.

Andean Countries Update Knowledge of Second Generation Surveillance



A workshop was held in July in Guayaquil (Ecuador) to review and update the concepts of second generation surveillance. Additionally, the meeting aimed at promoting the use of epidemiological surveillance systems on the development of plans in response to the HIV epidemic. The event was coordinated by PAHO, in collaboration with UNAIDS and CDC. Epidemiologists, heads of national HIV programs, representatives of civil society, academics, and staff from ORAS and PAHO participated in the workshop.

Among the most important agreements reached during the meeting is the development of monitoring and evaluation of the epidemiological surveillance plans, the establishment of common indicators and generic protocols in HIV surveillance, and the development of a research agenda. The workshop was part of the common work agenda established by PAHO and ORAS.

PAHO Harmonizes HIV Agenda with ORAS

With the objective of coordinating current HIV work strategies with Andean health systems and optimizing the opportunities for joint intervention, a coordination meeting between staff from PAHO's Family and Community Health area and their counterparts from the Andean Regional Health Agency (ORAS) was held in June in Lima.

The areas identified for the coordination of joint activities in HIV with the health systems include access to ARV drugs, prevention, the need for process and impact indicators, and the optimization of resources by strengthening interagency work.

Subjects such as pediatric AIDS, which includes the development and presentation of therapeutic formulas for pediatric use, monitoring and evaluation of surveillance systems, and the development of a subregional project based on strengthening human resources and improving research, which should be submitted to the Global Fund, were also examined.

Developing HIV Estimates for Latin America and the Caribbean

A series of workshops in Trinidad and Tobago and Panama were conducted by UNAIDS and PAHO/WHO in order to familiarize technical staff from countries of the region in the management of tools and software that are used for the development of HIV data on Latin America and the Caribbean.

After the training, participants will be able to develop preliminary data for 2007 in different aspects related to HIV, such as the number people with HIV, new HIV

infections, need for antiretroviral treatment, and the number of deaths and orphans related to AIDS.

The countries were each represented by two or more professionals (epidemiologists, specialists in evaluation, specialists in public health, and heads of national HIV programs). Professionals from PAHO/WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNAIDS, and UNFPA also participated.

The workshops were facilitated by Karen Stanecki, Paloma Cuchi, and Rob Leerla of UNAIDS, Jesus Maria García of WHO, Irum Zaidi of the CDC, and Bilali Camara of PAHO.

As a result of this training, new global estimates for HIV will be available for the celebration of World AIDS Day 2007. The final result of this work, information broken down by country, should be ready and published for the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico.

Third Meeting of the TAC in September 2007 in Guatemala



Technical Advisory
Committee on HIV/STI

The third meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee in HIV/STI will be held from 16 to 18 September in Guatemala.

The TAC consists of ten members, among them academics, medical technical personnel, and members of civil society, who advise the PAHO Secretariat on the definition of priorities, best strategies to reach the objectives proposed by the Member States, and the methods and research necessary for meeting the HIV targets in the Americas.

The TAC had its first meeting in Boca Chica (Dominican Republic), in January 2005, and its second meeting in Brasilia (Brazil), in January 2006.

More information: http://www.paho.org/english/ad/fch/ai/TAC_2006.htm

“Know your Status” Initiative launched on 27 June— HIV Testing and Counseling Services Awareness Day



The "Know your Status" Initiative, promoted by PAHO throughout the region, was launched on June 27, the date on which many countries commemorate the HIV Testing and Counseling Services Awareness Day. Countries throughout the Americas launched outreach efforts on that day urging their citizens to get tested for HIV as the first step in prevention, treatment, and care for disease. Started in the United States in 1994 by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), HIV Testing Awareness Day is now observed by countries around the world.

El Salvador has been one of the first countries being added to this regional initiative, producing a national communication campaign aimed at promoting testing on 27 June. Thousands of people visited health centers and hospitals being used for counseling and testing services. Additionally, other countries such as Cuba, Mexico, and the Bahamas joined this day with awareness campaigns promoting testing.

This initiative complements PAHO's activities to support the countries' efforts to strengthen and expand HIV testing and counseling services, within the broader context of the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention, care, and treatment services.

A web site for the Know Your Status Initiative was launched, making information available about activities promoting testing and counseling in the region: www.haztelaprueba.info (Spanish). An English web site is under development and will be available soon at www.knowyourstatus.info

The Global HIV Prevention Working Group launches New Report for "Scaling up" HIV prevention

In a new report released in June, *Bringing HIV Prevention to Scale: An Urgent Global Priority*, a panel of leading AIDS experts call for a major scale-up of global HIV prevention programs, citing new data projecting that expanded access to prevention could avert approximately 30 million of the 60 million HIV infections expected to occur by 2015.

The report, released by the Global HIV Prevention Working Group, warns that prevention efforts are not keeping pace with the gains being made in treating people infected with HIV. For every person who began antiretroviral therapy in 2006, six people were infected.

More: http://www.globalhivprevention.org/pdfs/PWG-HIV_prevention_report_FINAL.pdf

Central America Moves Towards Implementation of Regional HIV Plan

Central American countries, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic are carrying out a series of actions in order to prioritize PAHO's technical cooperation to support National HIV Programs in the analysis of the national response in the face of the Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector 2006-2015.

This analysis has made it possible to reach a consensus, validate, and approve strategic lines for cooperation in this region for the purpose of addressing themes, such as masculinity, sexual abuse, sex education and aspects related to the logistics and supplies for ARV medicines.

According to María Dolores Pérez-Rosales, Adviser on HIV for the Central American sub region, the priorities, defined jointly with National HIV Programs, include a series of workshops to strengthen epidemiological surveillance, programming, planning and procurement of strategic commodities for HIV. Another workshop will present the results of the gender-based violence study conducted in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Belize. The geographical expansion of this study to the entire subregion is underway, with the goal of presenting the results at the CONCASIDA meeting in Nicaragua, in November.

An evaluation of the Honduras PMTCT+ program is also underway, focusing on the need to strengthen the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Syphilis. The goal of this program is to reduce HIV transmission to less than 5% and to reduce congenital syphilis to less than 0.5 cases in 1,000 newborns.

More Information: http://www.paho.org/english/ad/fch/ai/hiv_reg_plan.htm

Third Latin American Health Journalism Award Launched

The RED-SALUD network, with support of PAHO, the Communication Initiative, and the Foundation for a New Ibero-American Journalism, launched the third edition of the Latin American Award for Health Journalism. The theme for this year's contest is HIV testing and counseling.

The goal is to give visibility and recognition to journalists whose work helps to inform the population about testing and promote its use, raise awareness among governments and civil society about the need for guaranteed access to testing, compile and disseminate materials and information about experiences in promoting HIV testing and counseling, and inform users and providers about the 3 C's of HIV testing (counseling, confidentiality, and informed consent). The deadline for submitting articles is November 9. Currently RED-SALUD only accepts submissions in Spanish.

More information: <http://www.comminit.com/la/redsaud/awards/2007/index.html>

WHO Removes Viracept® from Roche of its Prequalified List

Recently the pharmaceutical industry Roche announced the recall of batches of the antiretroviral product Viracept®, because of detection of the presence of a genotoxic impurity in produced batches. Viracept® contains nelfinavir as an active ingredient and was prequalified by WHO based on scientific evaluation of European Medicines Agency (EMA) and a valid marketing authorization in the European Union (EU).

The information on the presence of genotoxic impurity relates to batches of Viracept® supplied by Roche to the countries outside the US, Canada and Japan.

WHO issued recommendations that may be found on:

http://www.who.int/prequal/info_press/ViraceptWHOstatementJune14-07_En.pdf

WHO also suspended Viracept® from the list of WHO prequalified products and is following the situation with relevant stakeholders to be able to provide more specific information and advice. To ensure access to current information on this, please visit the homepage of the WHO Prequalification Program at <http://www.who.int/prequal>.

Colleagues in HIV/AIDS Unit to Receive PAHO's Annual Award for Outstanding Team



Left photo: Rafael Mazin, Jeanne Kent, Paul de la Croix, Mónica Alonso, Javier Muñoz, and Susan Mangan show the award received during the ceremony. Right photo: Dr. Cristina Beato, Deputy Director of PAHO at the time of giving the recognition to the Rafael Mazin who received it on behalf of the team

A team of colleagues from the HIV Unit and the Unit of Human Development Resources of PAHO received, directly from the hands of the Deputy Director of PAHO, Dr. Cristina

Beato, the award for "Outstanding Team", during the annual Award Ceremony held on 22 June in Washington.

Rafael Mazin, Mónica Alonso, and Javier Muñoz, of the Unit of HIV, along with Paul de la Croix-Vaubois, Jeanne Kent and Susan Mangan of the Area de Human Resources Development, with the support of Michèle Ooms, Miguel Agüero, and focal points selected in the countries, were responsible for the training and implementation of the policy, both at headquarters and in the country offices.

The 28 training sessions were attended by over 600 headquarters staff members (77% of HQ staff). The team also furnished assistance to the country offices to identify focal points for implementing the policy in the country offices and specialized centers.

Part of the success of this policy is PAHO's decision to endorse the creation and development of **United Nations Cares**, a global initiative designed to harmonize the work of all United Nations agencies in the HIV in the Workplace Program. The Director of PAHO approved a special budget for this initiative for the period 2008-2011.

Suggested Readings

- Guidance on provider-initiated HIV testing and counseling in health facilities (English): http://www.who.int/hiv/who_pitc_guidelines.pdf
- HIV testing and Counseling: <http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/vct/en/index.html>
- Male Circumcision recent news from American Academy of Pediatrics: http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?hint=1&DR_ID=45660
- HIV and Infant: Feeding Framework for Priority Action: http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/New_Publications/NUTRITION/HIV_IF_Framework_pp.pdf
- Management of HIV infection and antiretroviral therapy in infants and children: http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/AIDS_Management_of_HIV_infection.pdf

Most frequently used HIV Acronyms:

http://www.paho.org/English/AD/FCH/AI/Acronym_hivAIDS.pdf

The purpose of this bulletin, produced by the FCH/AI Unit, is to share information on the efforts of PAHO professionals involved in the response to HIV/STI. It is not an official document of the Organization.

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