



Media release

Embargo to
17.00 (Rio de Janeiro),
10 November 2009

NO EASY SOLUTION FOR MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS (MDR-TB) IN LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME NATIONS

10 November 2009 (Rio de Janeiro) – Health care leaders and experts from across the globe gathered at an international conference in Rio de Janeiro today to discuss the management and control of drug-resistant tuberculosis in health care facilities in low and middle-income countries, and confirmed there was no easy solution for cash-strapped nations.

In his presentation at the 36th World Hospital Congress of the International Hospital Federation, Dr Paul Jensen, lead for TB prevention control at the UC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), stated multiple interventions were needed to control the spread of drug-resistant TB. These needed interventions included buy-in and support from administrative or management structures, environmental controls such as adequate ventilation, and respiratory protection through the use of respirators, cough etiquette and other measures. And each of these interventions had to be applied to patients, their visitors, the health personnel who cared for them, and to the facility itself.

“The problem is that in resource-limited settings, it is often impossible to implement all these required infection control measures, and apply them in all the groups that need them. If we’re too quick to implement the activities and they fail because of lack of training and maintenance, or operational problems, we will end up in a worse infection control situation than the one we started with. Therefore each activity to be implemented, within each group, must be thoroughly investigated and assessed to decide which of the interventions could be put in place with maximum effectiveness,” said Dr Jensen.

Dr Sidney Parsons, professional engineer and principal researcher for the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, addressed the provision of suitable facilities for drug-resistant TB patients and their health care providers.

“Best practice guidance on how to provide appropriate buildings for these patients and the personnel that treat them is essential,” said Dr Parsons. “Many country-specific guidelines for the management and treatment of confirmed drug-resistant TB patients recommend hospitalization for a defined, often lengthy, period of treatment. Existing long-term care facilities for the treatment of drug-resistant TB patients are frequently poorly designed to address the needs and safety of patients and healthcare workers alike.”

It is important for the IHF to support this programme as it believes that there should be full involvement by healthcare facility decision makers and managers in the operational strategy and implementation of MDR-TB management and control programmes.

The special session on MDR-TB hosted by the International Hospital Federation is part of the communications and advocacy strategy of IHF's four-year (2008-2011) Phase II bilateral partnership programme, sponsored by the Lilly MDR-TB Partnership. The bilateral partnership was created in 2004 upon recognition of the need to address TB management within hospital and healthcare settings. Even more importantly, however, there was acknowledgment that it is vital that stakeholder groups of hospital and healthcare decision makers, be made fully aware of the challenges and engage in the fight against TB. Their exclusion may result in contra-productive decisions and actions in the fight against MDR-TB.

IHF announced the launch of its online tuberculosis manual toolkit for hospital decision makers – www.ihf-fih.org, which is also available on CD-ROM.

The World Hospital Congress, the showcase and main event of the International Hospital Federation, is held every two years in different host countries. The event is the world's unique forum at which decision makers and leaders of regional and national healthcare federations, hospitals and healthcare organizations, are brought together to engage in dialogue, exchange experiences, ideas and knowledge on best practices in leadership in hospital and healthcare management and delivery of services.

Issued by the International Hospital Federation
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