

World Hepatitis Alliance

WHO updates

Last month the Alliance had the opportunity to meet the newly formed viral hepatitis unit at WHO headquarters in Geneva, which has been given the name of Global Hepatitis Programme.

We are very excited to be working with a team of motivated professionals who are keen on pushing the hepatitis agenda amongst the Member States. The unit will be launching the Global Strategy on viral hepatitis this month and has been in contact with the regional offices to make them aware of their plans. On this note, PAHO has taken the lead on adapting and disseminating the strategy and has convened a meeting with key stakeholders to discuss their work plans for Latin America. We have been invited to attend this important meeting and will be updating you on its outcomes in the next newsletter.



We are sorry to announce that Dr Steven Wiersma, the Hepatitis Prevention Lead at WHO and the institution's current observer at the Alliance's Executive Board, will be leaving his job at WHO next March. Amongst many other things, Steven was directly involved with the set up of the Global Hepatitis Programme at WHO and the development of the Global Hepatitis Strategy. We are very grateful for all the work put by Steven towards last year's achievements and for his dedication to the hepatitis cause. He will be very missed by the hepatitis community.

Viral Hepatitis and the MDGs

As we previously announced, the president of the Alliance, Charles Gore, co-chaired a meeting to discuss the inclusion of hepatitis B and C in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held on December 22, 2011 at the Academy of Medical Sciences in London.

Many issues were discussed during the meeting including the prospects for a 2015 MDG paradigm as well as the involvement of the Global Fund, relevant lessons from the HIV/AIDS campaign and the powerful message carried by the hepatitis B and C data.

It was argued that the hepatitis group should work towards the 2015 MDGs, but not as the main goal of its global strategy. Finally, it was decided that a written proposal would be submitted to the participants on how to proceed within the next few months.

Official relations with WHO



During the last Executive Board Meeting of WHO (17/01 - 23/01), the Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organization recommended the Alliance to be admitted into official relations with WHO. The official relations status recognises the cooperation that has been ongoing between the Alliance and WHO, giving credibility to the organisation and to the hepatitis community as a whole (You can learn more about the Reports of Committees of the Executive Board at: http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB130/B130_31-en.pdf)

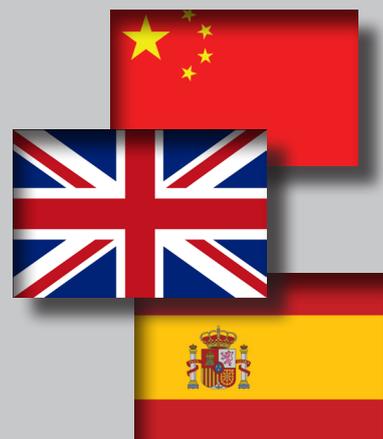
This is hepatitis...

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to the Alliance:

Wu Jieping Medical Foundation
wjpmfld@163.com;
Non-voting Member (Western Pacific Region)

European Coalition of Positive People
cwebb@ecpp.co.uk;
Non-voting Member (Europe Region)

Regrettably, the group Asociacion Española de Enfermos de Hepatitis C (AsoEEHC) from Valencia in Spain was recently dismantled due to political and funding issues and consequently ceased to be a member of the Alliance.



Materials for 2012

Launched in 2010, the theme this is hepatitis... remains the name of the overarching campaign for WHD but new for 2012 is the slogan 'It's closer than you think'. The new slogan encourages people to recognise how prevalent the condition it is in, facing the fact that hepatitis is "closer to home" and breaking down stigma. The slogan will be used jointly with other messages such as 'hepatitis affects 1 in 12 people'.

The Alliance has been liaising with WHO to guarantee the campaign materials and toolkits for 2012 are delivered much earlier than last year. Posters have been finalised and we have started the process of producing a new awareness raising video.

Algeria National Hepatitis Day 2012

On 12th January, SOS Hépatites Algeria celebrated their National Hepatitis Day by organising a national radio competition on disease prevention.

The day was also an opportunity to assess and revisit the recommendations made in Parliament at Algiers in June 2009 with regards to the management of viral hepatitis, which as Hamid Boualeg, President of the organisation, declared remains inadequate. He also expressed his concern about available data not reflecting the real situation in the country and called for the establishment of a robust national strategy to tackle this major public health issue. Professor Saadi Berkane also addressed several issues and in particular lamented the lack of screening for hepatitis among pregnant women, of training for health workers and epidemiological studies on this disease.



Regional Board Members

Africa Region

Theobald Owusu-Ansah
Theobald Hepatitis B Foundation
(Ghana)
theobald2003@yahoo.com

Americas Region

Michael Ninburg
Hepatitis Education Project
(USA)
mhninburg@hepeducation.org

Eastern Mediterranean Region

Nady Chaïa
Hép Attitude Positive
(Lebanon)
nadychaia@positivehepattitude.org

Europe Region

Dalibor Ruzic
Hepatos
(Croatia)
dalibor@hepatos.hr

President

Charles Gore
The Hepatitis C Trust
(United Kingdom)
charles.gore@worldhepatitisalliance.org

Western Pacific Region

Anthong Tze Ching Wong
Asiahep Hong Kong Limited
(Hong Kong, China)
pepsiblue@gmail.com

South East Asia Region

Humayun Kabir, MD
Liver Foundation of Bangladesh
(Bangladesh)
dr.kabirhumayun@gmail.com