

Minutes of the National Technical Working Group meeting on HIV-TB Collaborative activities on 8th October'09

The Meeting of the National level TWG on HIV-TB collaborative activities was conducted under the chairmanship of Dr. D Bachani, DDG (NACO) and was attended by the following:

1. Dr. Devesh Gupta, CMO, CTD
2. Dr. Polin Chan, Country Officer (HIV), WHO-India
3. Dr B.B. Rewari, NPO (ART) NACO
4. Dr. Suresh Mohammed, NPO (ICTC)
5. Dr. Puneet Dewan, MO (TB), WHO-SEARO
6. Dr. Rahul Thakur, Consultant, HIV-TB, NACO
7. Dr. Mallik Parmar, WHO TB-HIV consultant, CTD
8. Dr. Ajay Kumar, WHO TB-HIV consultant, CTD
9. Dr. Vartika Sharma, Technical Officer, HIV-TB, NACO
10. Dr. Sukarma Tanwar, Technical Officer, ART, NACO

The following issues were discussed:

- The minutes of the last TWG meeting were discussed and a follow up was done on the key action points
- The final draft of the ART-TB module was discussed which included the revised reporting/recording formats and incorporated the suggestions made by the ART-TRG group. The module was agreed upon by the Technical Working Group with minor modifications and asked to be circulated within a week for approval. For the training of the master trainers for this module, it was decided to incorporate it with the scheduled training of the master trainers at the ART Centers of Excellences (CoE) from third week of Oct'09. It was also suggested by DDG (NACO) that feedback on the reporting and recording formats may be taken from few ART centers, so as to make necessary changes before scale up across the country. The HIV-TB team was also asked to see the feasibility of including the ART-TB register/report in the new CIMS software.
- The issue of procurement of Rifabutin for HIV infected TB patients on second line ART was discussed. It was made clear to the group that PI based ART would also be provided by other centers but would be initiated by the CoEs. NPO (ART) committed to provide the expected number of such patients so as to give an idea to the State TB Cell regarding the requirement for rifabutin. It was also discussed and decided that the CoE would provide Rifabutin for two weeks instead of one week as decided initially.
- The salient features of the revised National Framework on HIV/TB were presented to the members for discussion. The following changes were suggested and agreed upon in the group:
 - Goal of the National Framework to be renamed as purpose or the overall objective of the framework.
 - Restructure the ToRs and composition of the SCC and STWG so as to avoid any overlap of activities. STWG to be renamed as a State Working Group (SWG)

since they are involved in mostly implementing technical guidelines issued by NACO & CTD.

- It was also decided that the DCCs are to be organized by DAPCU Nodal officers or DTOs (in districts where there is no DAPCU)
- The plan for up rapid scaling the Intensified Package was also discussed and the group was informed that 6 more states (Assam, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala, Orissa and West Bengal) have been included in the next phase to be started at the earliest. It was discussed regarding the feasibility of starting the intensified package district wise in in Cat A and B districts of the states which are not still implementing the Intensified Package.
- The guidelines agreed upon by the Technical Resource Group on ART for starting and stopping CPT amongst HIV Infected TB patients was discussed and it was decided that all HIV infected TB patients can be started CPT irrespective of CD4 counts through the decentralized drug delivery mechanism operational under the intensified package and the continuation of CPT would be by the ART center SMO/MO as per the CD4 criteria.
- The Module on Whole Blood HIV testing of TB patients was discussed and the following were the salient discussion points:
 - The word counseling for the TB patients needs to be changed to pre and post test information since the counseling involves much more than just imparting information about HIV/AIDS disease and the HIV testing
 - It was suggested to add information regarding PEP as per the NACO guidelines and also include safe disposal of waste (infected blood etc.) in the module
 - It was also suggested that this module should be pilot tested in a few districts before rolling it out across the country.
 - It was observed that the module should just not be used for training of the Medical Officers but may be used for training the team involved in the Whole Blood testing of TB patients
- The issue of IPT was discussed and it was decided that an Operation Research on Isoniazid Prophylaxis Therapy for HIV positive patients would be prepared for submission to the OR committee at NACO so that it could be initiated at some of the CoEs.
- Proposal from GLRA regarding starting of HIV counseling and testing at the DMCs which are under the different NGO schemes under RNTCP and the CRS proposal to strengthen HIV/TB activities in the NE region was also discussed and it was decided that they final version from them would be discussed in the next TWG.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.