

## **Minutes of the National Technical Working Group meeting on HIV-TB Collaborative activities on 23<sup>rd</sup> March'10**

The Meeting of the National level TWG on HIV-TB collaborative activities was conducted under the chairpersonship of Secretary & DG, NACO and was attended by the following:

1. Dr. D.Bachani, DDG, NACO
2. Dr. L.S.Chauhan, DDG, CTD
3. Dr. Devesh Gupta, CMO, CTD
4. Dr B.B. Rewari, NPO (ART) , NACO
5. Dr. Suresh Mohammed, NPO (ICTC), NACO
6. Dr. Puneet Dewan, MO (TB), WHO-SEARO
7. Dr. Malik Parmar, WHO Consultant, CTD
8. Dr. Ajay Kumar, WHO Consultant, CTD
9. Dr. Vartika Sharma, Technical Officer, HIV-TB, 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 Basic Training module on HIV/TB for ART center staff and counselors, jointly prepared by NACO & CTD was approved by the NTWG. It was decided to use the same in all future trainings conducted for the ART center staff and ICTC counselors respectively.
- Secretary & DG, NACO emphasized the importance of routine offer of HIV counseling & testing to all TB patients. It was brought to his notice that the "Intensified Package" (which includes the policy of routine offer of HIV testing to all TB patients) is currently implemented in 11 states and will be implemented in 7 more states by Apr'10. Thus, all the states with high burden of HIV and TB are already involved in it. In 2010-11, the activity would be further expanded to the 10 states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura.
- The Secretary & DG also stressed upon the need for routine offer of HIV counseling and testing to all TB patients, and possibly even TB suspects. Dr. Chauhan, DDG-TB informed that with the expansion of the intensified TB-HIV package, the expansion of HIV testing to all TB patients is being taken care of. The routine referral of all TB suspects could be considered in the future provided there was enough local sub-district capacity for HIV testing the large numbers of TB suspects.
- The Secretary & DG also underscored the importance for referring general ICTC clients to the designated microscopy centers in order to improve early TB diagnosis. Dr. Puneet Dewan informed that this activity is by and large already happening through intensified TB case finding at all ICTCs in the intensified package states and has been reliably reported on by SACS for the past 4 years. The ICF activity is meant to be happening at all ICTCs nationwide, but unfortunately very few other states are systematically reporting from all ICTCs. Major efforts are immediately required to strengthen the reporting of ICF activities from ICTCs in those remaining states.

- Secretary & DG, NACO emphasized the need of further strengthening the coordination between the HIV and TB programme staff at the field level. The role of DAPCU in the high priority districts along with District Coordination Committee (HIV-TB) was reiterated.
- For ensuring easy accessibility of HIV testing services for all TB patients, it was decided to train the lab technicians at DMCs on Whole Blood Finger Prick HIV test. It is currently being rolled out in the high priority districts of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Orissa. In these states, 1-2 STLS per district will be trained during the state level ToT, who will further assist the district level trainings of Lab technicians.
- The establishment of HIV-TB cell, as approved under RCC Round 2, was discussed. It was decided to involve the National TB institutes (National TB Institutes (NTI), Bangalore; Tuberculosis Research center (TRC), Chennai; Lala Ram Swarup Chest & lung hospital (LRS), Delhi) and State TB training & demonstration centers (STDC) at Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Guwahati, Kolkatta, Patiala and Ajmer for the same. The cell will be provided additional manpower and one time grant for institutional capacity building. The funds will be directly transferred to the 3 National TB Institutes and through SACS for the STDCs. The new positions available at the HIV-TB cell will be put up for approval of the National AIDS Control Board (NACB). Once approved, the recruitment of the staff will be taken up locally at these institutes.
- An operation research on provision of Isoniazid prophylaxis to HIV patients at ART centers is approved under the RCC round 2. However, considering few unanswered questions on implementing the prophylaxis, it was decided to conduct a workshop at NACO in the month of April to develop the protocol for the same.
- It was brought to the notice of the group that the Regional Co-ordinators under CST Division were not aware of the new activities initiated for HIV-TB at the ART centers. It was suggested that
  - A sensitization workshop may be arranged for capacity building of the consultants for further supervision and handholding of the ART centers.
  - NACO may direct the Regional Coordinators under CST to participate in all the TB/HIV related trainings and meetings in the state.