IUATLD NAR returns to Vancouver
February 28-March 2, 2013

For this, the second issue of the Stop TB Canada Newsletter, we are excited to bring you details of the 17th annual North American Region meeting of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, taking place later this month in Vancouver, and World TB Day on March 24.

The NAR meeting will be taking place February 28 - March 2 at the Sheraton Wall Centre, and includes a day of Stop TB programming with a special focus on childhood TB. See inside this newsletter issue for a special feature on the meeting's content.

With the meeting’s return to Vancouver - thanks to the generous support of the British Columbia Lung Association, who also support Stop TB Canada’s activities - we thought we’d launch this newsletter with a few words on BC’s history of TB.

This issue’s cover image is a postcard showing the Tranquille Sanatorium, opened by the BC Anti-Tuberculosis League in 1907 just outside Kamloops, BC. By the 1950s, Tranquille had grown to 40 buildings over 191 acres, including four hospitals. The facility produced much of its own food, including beef and honey, and housed as many as 600 clients and staff at any given time. With waning TB case numbers in the 1950s, Tranquille later became a mental health facility and continued to house clients until its closure in 1983. The site is now a popular destination for photographers.

Tranquille’s founders, the Anti-Tuberculosis League, became the BC Tuberculosis League in 1936, then the BC TB Christmas Seal Society in 1964. As the impact of TB lessened, the group expanded its mandate to include other lung diseases, eventually rebranding itself as the BC Lung Association in 1978.

Currently, TB in BC is the responsibility of both the regional health authorities and the BC Centre for Disease Control. Approximately 300 cases of active TB are diagnosed in BC each year, with the majority occurring in the foreign-born and in the Vancouver/Lower Mainland area. The province recently ratified a new TB strategy, setting ambitious goals to reduce incidence in foreign- and Canadian-born by 2022.
TB stakeholders from around North America will be meeting in Vancouver February 28 - March 2 for the 17th Annual Meeting of the IUATLD North American Region. This year’s theme is “Tuberculosis: The Air We Share”, and the three-day program features keynote speakers and plenary sessions on topics ranging from TB transmission to community partnerships. A satellite session will introduce the new 7th edition of the Canadian TB Standards, and Thursday features a special session of Stop TB International programming.

If you’re joining us for the meeting in Vancouver, please come say hello to your Stop TB Canada membership and newsletter team: Anne Fanning, Menn Biagtan, Jay Johnston, and Jennifer Gardy. We’ll have hard copies of the newsletter available, and would love to hear your feedback and suggestions.

For information on what to do and where to eat while in Vancouver, check out scoutmagazine.ca or yaletowninfo.com, which features a directory of restaurants and business in the Yaletown area, a 10-minute walk from the conference site.

New online course on operational research

By Jennifer Gardy

The TREAT TB (Technology, Research, Education, and Technical Assistance for TB) initiative, a project of the IUATLD, recently released an online e-learning tool to provide an introduction to the what, why, and how of operational research.

Available at http://www.treattb.org/index.php/operational-research-e-tool.html, the course takes approximately 45 minutes to complete and introduces learners to the steps of operational research, study design principles, and ethical principles. The course is free and open to anyone with an internet connection, and can be stopped and resumed at any point.

The online course is one of many electronic initiatives led by TREAT TB, including an Xpert mapping project and an online overview of impact assessment frameworks and policy transfer analysis.
March 24 commemorates the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch astounded the scientific community by announcing that he had discovered the cause of tuberculosis, the TB bacillus. At the time of Koch’s announcement in Berlin, TB was raging through Europe and the Americas, causing the death of one out of every seven people. Koch’s discovery opened the way towards diagnosing and curing TB.

Today there are still 8.7 million new cases and 1.2 million deaths annually, although a safe, effective, curative drug regimen has been available for over 50 years. TB is largely a disease of poverty, affecting nations and communities where access to health care is limited. The challenges today are to ensure suitable diagnosis and treatment for all persons with TB everywhere; to enable communities to handle drug-resistant TB, by identifying it before it spreads further; and providing suitably targeted treatment; to recognize and remedy the fact that childhood TB is too often missed, causing needless suffering and death, for lack of better diagnostic tools and paediatric drug dosages.

World TB Day aims to raise awareness of the continuing crisis of TB and the funding gap, and asks individuals and organizations around the world to make their voices heard. In your lifetime, you have the right to expect zero TB deaths, universal access to TB care, faster treatment, quick and low-cost tests, effective vaccines, and a world free of TB.

Let your voice be heard! Join in one of the many World TB Day events being held around the world, including three in Canada, or visit http://www.stop tb .org/events/world _tb _day/2013/.

Ottawa

On Thursday, March 21, Stop TB Canada Chair Dr. Anne Fanning will host an event in the Charles Lynch Press Room in the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery. Dr. Fanning will be joined by Anna Fowler (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami), Dr. Diego Garcia (Assembly of First Nations), Dr. Pamela Orr (University of Manitoba), and Aboriginal Affairs Critic Dr. Carolyn Bennett. Together, the group will brief attendees on the state of TB globally and in Canada - particularly in our North - and ask that Canadians rise to the challenge of

Vancouver

For the fourth year in a row, the Centre for Tuberculosis Research at the University of British Columbia will host a symposium and keynote address to mark World TB Day.

Montreal

On Thursday March 21, join Drs. Marcel Behr, Dick Menzies, and Madhukar Pai from McGill's new International Tuberculosis Centre for a CIHR Café Scientifique entitled “Tuberculosis in Canada: From North to South”. The event runs from 17h00-19h00 at the Café du Monument National- Scène Financière Sun Life 1182, Boul. St-Laurent.
Stop TB Partnership endorses TAG’s TB Zeroes campaign

By Jennifer Gardy

The Treatment Action Group (TAG), an independent AIDS think tank, celebrated a success with the recent endorsement of their “TB Zeroes” global strategy by the Stop TB Partnership. The Zeroes campaign, launched in May 2012, presents an alternative to the WHO Stop TB strategy, emphasizing a goal of zero TB deaths, zero infections, and zero suffering and stigma. TAG authored the Zero Declaration, founded on three principles: “TB is preventable and curable; the main driver of today’s unnecessary TB deaths, new TB infections, and suffering and stigma is lack of political will; and every country in the world has the potential to reach the goal of zero TB deaths, zero new TB infections, and zero TB suffering and stigma.”

Since launching, the Zero Declaration has been signed by over 500 organizations and individuals (you can sign it at www.treatmentactiongroup.org/tb/advocacy/zero-declaration). TAG also hosted a one-day symposium at the Union World Conference on Lung Health in Kuala Lumpur in November, shortly after which the Stop TB Partnership’s Coordinating Board met and voted to endorse the Zeroes campaign.

First new TB drug in 40 years approved

By James Johnston

On December 28, 2012, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted accelerated approval to bedaquiline (aka TMC207 or trade name Sirturo) a new drug for treatment of Multidrug Resistant TB. The drug received accelerated approval in a public hearing after Phase IIb clinical trial results with a phase III trial underway. The drug manufacturer, Johnson & Johnson, has given to the TB alliance a royalty free license to develop and sell the drug worldwide. The drug is hopefully the first of many new medications emerge for MDRTB treatment after a renewal of TB research and development over the past decade.

To read more see http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm333695.htm or http://www.who.int/tb/information_note_bedaquiline/en/index.html

Substandard drugs proliferate globally

By James Johnston

A recent international initiative to investigate sub-standard and counterfeit TB drugs was reported in the March issue of the IJTLD. The article exposes significant rates of sub-standard drugs in private pharmacies on several continents, with as many as one in six isoniazid or rifampicin tables from neighbourhood pharmacies or markets failing to meet baseline quality standards. These findings raise concerns regarding the stability of drug supplies in low-income countries and highlight the need for drug stewardship, particularly in the context of multi-drug resistant TB. Study author Roger Bate, author of “Phake: The Deadly World of Falsified and Substandard Medicines”, contributed an opinion piece to the New York Times, which can be read at the NYT website.

SAVE THE DATE:
UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Keystone Conferences: Tuberculosis: Host Response & Understanding the Enemy
13 - 18 March 2013, Whistler, BC, Canada

American Thoracic Society International Conference
17 - 22 May 2013, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Chest 2013
26 - 31 October, Chicago, IL, USA

44th Union World Conference on Lung Health
30 October - 3 November 2013, Paris, France
Congratulations to Dr. Dick Menzies of McGill University, who was awarded the Union 2012 Scientific Prize at the 43rd World Union Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The award recognizes a researcher who has made a significant contribution to TB research in the past five years.

With over 200 papers to his name and a career spanning TB programs in from Canada to Ecuador to Lesotho, Dr. Menzies is an inspiration to this peers. We are proud to have him as part of the Canadian TB research community!

Other awardees at the conference included Young Investigator Prize winner David Dowdy (USA) and Karel Styblo Public Health Prize winner Karin Weyer (South Africa).

March 24 is the planned release date of the newest edition of the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards. This edition – the first since 2007 – represents a collaboration between many provincial and federal TB stakeholders.

To learn more about the new edition, join Dr. Dick Menzies (McGill University) and Dr. Tom Wong (PHAC) on Thursday, March 1 at 12:30pm at the IUATLD NAR conference in Vancouver.

International Headlines from Stop TB

- Landmark meeting on post-2015 TB targets held in Geneva
- Community activists meet to cement their future role in the fight against TB
- No major breakthrough imminent in quest for TB vaccine
- United States Government Announces $11 Million in Additional Support for Rapid TB Test in 14 Countries
- Sir John Crofton Fund to Fight TB launched in London
- TB REACH commits US $ 27 million for finding and treating people with TB
- TB REACH grantees report twenty-fold acceleration in ability to find people with TB
- Desmond Tutu TB Centre receives Stop TB Partnership Kochon Prize
- Advocates draw up to-do list to tackle childhood TB
Recent Canadian TB research highlights


Albanna AS, Smith BM, Cowan D, Menzies D. **Fixed dose combination anti-tuberculosis therapy: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** Eur Respir J.


Alvarez GG, Sabri E, Ling D, Cameron DW, Maartens G, Wilson D. **A model to rule out smear-negative tuberculosis among symptomatic HIV patients using C-reactive protein.** Int J Tuberc Lung Dis.

Bauer M, Leavens A, Schwartzman K. **A systematic review and meta-analysis of the impact of tuberculosis on health-related quality of life.** Qual Life Res.

Burian J, Ramón-García S, Howes CG, Thompson CJ. **WhiB7, a transcriptional activator that coordinates physiology with intrinsic drug resistance in Mycobacterium tuberculosis.** Expert Rev Anti Infect Ther.


Pai M, Palamountain KM. **New tuberculosis technologies: challenges for retooling and scale-up.** Int J Tuberc Lung Dis.


Pinto LM, Pai M, Dheda K, Schwartzman K, Menzies D, Steingart KR. **Scoring systems using chest radiographic features for the diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis in adults: a systematic review.** Eur Respir J.

Poirier V, Av-Gay Y. **Mycobacterium tuberculosis modulators of the macrophage’s cellular events.** Microbes Infect.


Wong D, Chao JD, Av-Gay Y. **Mycobacterium tuberculosis-secreted phosphatases: from pathogenesis to targets for TB drug development.** Trends Microbiol.

Wright GD. **Back to the future: a new 'old' lead for tuberculosis.** EMBO Mol Med.

JOIN THE STOP TB CANADA INITIATIVE

Annual dues are $25.00 for trainees, $50.00 for regular members, and $100.00 for an organizational membership. For more information or to join, email Dr. Menn Biagtan at biagtan@bc.lung.ca.