



Partnerships – Key to Improving Health Outcomes for Tuberculosis/HIV Patients

**A Joint Statement by the
Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association
and
*International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation***

“TB/HIV is a deadly combination,” says Dr Lee Jong-wook, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, “but with effective treatment, TB can be cured, HIV managed and the health of millions of people preserved.”¹

The treatment of tuberculosis (TB) has been complicated by the increasing resistance of TB drugs and the rapid spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. About 30% of HIV positive people are also infected with TB and TB is the leading cause of death amongst this group.

The key to successful treatment of TB is a partnership amongst patients, carers and health professionals. Such a partnership is necessary to ensure effective drug use.

If sufferers of standard TB received the right drug, in the right dose at the right time and received on-going support during the six month course of treatment, they could achieve a cure. This is an essential element of the DOTS (directly observed therapy short course) protocol, which has been successfully introduced in 140 countries worldwide.

Pharmacists have expertise in drug management and drug information, both essential requisites in the provision of effective health care, especially as it relates to TB/HIV. Pharmacists are easily accessible healthcare practitioners and are in an ideal position to implement the DOTS protocol.

The Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA) and the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) are both committed to the implementation of the DOTS protocol and will work jointly to promote pharmacist, student and public awareness of the advantages of this therapy.

¹ WHO Press Release 21 January, 2004.

As the global pool of adequately trained health professionals is steadily diminishing, it is the responsibility of educational institutions, professional bodies and student organizations to work collaboratively to ensure that appropriately trained pharmacists are able to practise in all communities. No where is this more urgent than in communities of high incidence of TB/HIV co-infection.

CPA will encourage teaching institutions to incorporate periods of practical experience into theoretical study, in order to provide students with valuable learning opportunities in a professional environment.

Both CPA and IPSF believe that the undergraduate course in pharmacy is simply the beginning of life long learning, especially in the provision of healthcare and the expanding role of pharmacists in patient care.

Through its national member organizations, the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association will seek to provide opportunities for pharmacy students to experience and, where possible, become involved with existing DOTS programmes.

The Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association and the International Pharmaceutical Students Federation will jointly participate in World Tuberculosis Day and World Aids Day annually to promote public awareness of the benefits of early recognition of TB and HIV and the timely commencement of appropriate treatment to help achieve better health outcomes for TB/HIV sufferers.

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