

Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana

The Gaborone Statement

on

The Role of the Pharmacist in the Prevention & Management of HIV/AIDS in Botswana

Rationale

“HIV/AIDS is the biggest challenge our health system currently faces. We have reached the stage of a mature epidemic.... It is estimated that 60%-70% of inpatient medical ward beds have patients with HIV/AIDS related conditions.”¹ HIV prevalence amongst persons aged 15-49 years is estimated at 35%, with male life expectancy at birth to be 40.2 years and female life expectancy at birth to be 40.6 years.²

Pharmacists have had a central role in the planning, design and implementation of the antiretroviral (ARV) program in Botswana. Currently 19,000 people are on treatment. Under the WHO 3X5 Initiative, Botswana is aiming to have 55,000 people on treatment by the end of 2005. “Pharmacists in the public and private sectors have a major role to play in making this possible,” said Deputy Permanent Secretary, Dr Themba Moeti.³

Process

The Gaborone Statement is based on the outcomes of a Symposium and Workshop held in collaboration with the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA) during the 16th Annual Congress of the Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana, in Gaborone, 27th-28th May, 2004,. Over 50 pharmacists from throughout Botswana from all areas of pharmacy practice attended the meeting. Representatives from the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Coordinating Agency, the MASA Antiretroviral Therapy Programme, the Botswana Network of People Living with AIDS, and other non-government organisations also participated.

¹ Dr Themba Moeti, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health: Opening Address, 16th Annual Congress of Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana.

² The World Health Report 2004: Figure 1.3, page 6.

³ Dr Themba Moeti, op.cit.

At interactive workshop sessions, participants combined information and experience to define more prominent and constructive roles for pharmacists in the fight against HIV/AIDS, particularly during the scale up of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to make treatment more available and accessible. Recommended strategies to be undertaken by the Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana as well as by individual pharmacists resulted from intensive discussion amongst the diverse group participating in the Workshop.

Pharmacists and their colleagues were renewed in their conviction that they can proactively contribute to the prevention of HIV infection and the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients and they are committed to this in the interest of the health of all people living in Botswana.

***General Statements from the
Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association
“Ocho Rios Statement on the Role of the Pharmacist
in the Prevention & Management of HIV/AIDS”
Jamaica, August, 2003.***

Pharmacist members of the Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana confirm their commitment to the following principles contained in the “Ocho Rios Statement”:

- Pharmacists are members of multi-professional health care teams.
- Pharmacists are the primary legal custodians of medicines and can provide authoritative consumer health information regarding medicines.
- Pharmacists play an important role in helping to break down the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.
- Pharmacists can deliver professional treatment, advice and information in a caring and confidential environment.
- Pharmacists will maintain patient privacy and confidentiality.
- Pharmacists are committed to working with governments in the development and implementation of policies and strategies to improve access to information and in the provision of affordable ARV therapy.

Opportunities for Action and Collaboration in the Scale Up of Antiretroviral Therapy in Botswana

The Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana will direct its efforts and resources towards:

- Developing sustainable and cost-effective public/private partnerships between government and community pharmacy to facilitate the scale up of ART.
- Adopting a multisectoral approach and working strategically with the Ministry of Health, other related ministries and government agencies in the development and implementation of strategies to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS.
- Nominating pharmacists to positions on national government and professional committees relating to HIV/AIDS.
- Facilitating access to up-to-date information necessary for pharmacists to fulfil their role as part of the health care team.
- Providing continuing education programmes in HIV/AIDS prevention and management, including ART, or facilitating access to such courses provided by other institutions.
- Undertaking promotional campaigns and providing relevant materials for pharmacies to undertake consumer and staff information, education and training activities, separately and in collaboration with other agencies.
- Facilitating the participation of pharmacists in scientific and operational research to continually evaluate and improve the quality of care and treatment for HIV/AIDS patients.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana will encourage individual pharmacists to:

- Provide services without prejudice or discrimination and maintain patient confidentiality.
- Use all available sources to remain informed and up-to-date about HIV/AIDS.
- Adequately train support staff to provide relevant and reliable services to HIV/AIDS patients and their carers.
- Participate fully in local and national HIV/AIDS consumer education campaigns.
- Provide appropriate facilities for confidential patient counselling.
- Collaborate with other health care providers and government programmes to enhance the team effort.
- Participate in practice research to continually evaluate and improve the quality of care and treatment for HIV/AIDS patients.

Implementing Strategies

The Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana encourages all pharmacists and pharmaceutical organisations to adopt a multisectoral approach when implementing strategies, to acknowledge cultural, gender and social sensitivities and to promote equitable access to all medicines, information and services.

The Role of the Pharmacist at Community Level

Pharmacists can inform, educate and communicate using a combination of HIV prevention strategies such as:

- Posters/leaflets encouraging abstinence, especially within “at-risk” groups.
- Posters/leaflets in pharmacies and clinics promoting safe sex.
- Posters/leaflets encouraging people to know their HIV status.
- Posters/leaflets encouraging people to routinely undergo voluntary counselling & testing.
- Talks, posters/leaflets in local languages where appropriate.
- Talks in schools, participation in school and community activities, starting at primary level.
- Media presentations – TV, radio, print – using health advice columns, question and answer columns, talk-back radio sessions, etc, and helping to “demystify” HIV/AIDS.
- National/international “pharmacy awareness campaigns”, e.g. World AIDS Day.

Pharmacists can deliver quality pharmaceutical care and treatment by:

- Maintaining high standards of pharmacy practice and abiding by established guidelines in good pharmacy practice.
- Providing counselling areas, in accordance with accreditation requirements, in pharmacies and clinics to ensure patient privacy and confidentiality.
- Providing and maintaining support for patients and carers to promote adherence (e.g., monitoring, medication review and treatment of opportunistic infections), in accordance with accreditation requirements.
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of ART and acquiring skills necessary for patient counselling.
- Referring patients and consumers to government programmes in voluntary counselling and testing; maternal and child health clinics.

The Role of the Pharmacist at Government Level

Working with and through the Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana, pharmacists can:

- Build working relationships with politicians and Ministry representatives.
- Assist government to implement and enforce pharmacy regulatory requirements.
- Establish criteria for the accreditation of all pharmacies.
- Establish criteria for the accreditation of those pharmacies dispensing ARVs and providing on-going treatment, therapy and support for patients.
- Negotiate public/private contracts with government to enable accelerated access to ART through community pharmacies.
- Advocate for remuneration of cognitive services provided by pharmacists at community pharmacies.
- Contribute to policy development and implementation at national level.
- Engage in practice research to accumulate data on rational drug use and evidence of pharmacy input and impact on health outcomes, relating to HIV/AIDS.

The Role of the Pharmacist in Collaboration with other Agencies

Working collaboratively with other agencies, the Pharmaceutical Society of Botswana and its members can maximise their impact by:

- Taking advantage of increased access to training and education in ART.
- Working to develop sustainable contracts with government to supply ARVs and associated support services.
- Collaborating with other agencies in the promotion of HIV prevention strategies at community level and the promotion of routine voluntary counselling & testing.
- Communicating regularly with people living with AIDS to understand their needs and to inform them about their medications and available support services.