

PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF KENYA

The Nairobi Statement On The Role of the Pharmacist in the Prevention & Management of HIV/AIDS in Kenya

Rationale

Kenya continues to face a severe, generalised HIV/AIDS epidemic affecting all sectors of society. HIV/AIDS was declared a national disaster and public health emergency in 1999. An estimated 1.5 million Kenyans have died from AIDS and an estimated 1.2 million Kenyans currently live with HIV infection.¹ Vulnerable groups include AIDS orphans, girls and young women between the ages of 15-24 years and rural communities which make up 80% of Kenya's population.

Introduction

Adult HIV prevalence is estimated at 6.1%, a significant decrease from the national estimated prevalence of 13.5% in 2001.² Despite falling prevalence rates, the numbers of people living with HIV continues to rise due to population growth and the life-prolonging effects of antiretroviral therapy. At June 2005, an estimated 233,000 people in Kenya remained in need of antiretroviral therapy.¹

Established in 1999 within the Office of the President, the National AIDS Control Council, through the National HIV/AIDS and STD Control Program (NAS COP), is implementing the Kenya National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2005-2010 with its supporting National HIV/AIDS Communication Strategy to guide development, co-ordination and implementation of HIV/AIDS control programs. Sessional Paper 4 passed by Parliament in 1997, provides a policy framework to guide all partners, in both public and private sectors, in the provision of services relating to treatment, voluntary counselling and testing, home-based care, blood safety, preventing mother-to-child transmission and diagnostic testing and counselling.

The Government of Kenya, in line with the "3 ones" policy adopted by African governments in 2003,² is harnessing the expertise, networks and institutional capacity of civil society organisations in its fight against the pandemic. This strategy provides an important bridge between public and private sectors. The private sector has been actively involved in the provision of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services since the beginning of the epidemic in Kenya. There is recognition now that improved co-ordination of programs between public and private sectors could lead to expanded access to treatment. In addition, there is an increasing evidence base of successful interventions. Strengthening the ties and frameworks between all major stakeholders in the fight against HIV/AIDS could contribute to the further development and sustainability of a Kenyan health infrastructure focusing on interventions appropriate and relevant to Kenyan communities.

¹ Country Profile – Kenya. World Health Organisation 2005. Geneva. Available at www.who.int/hiv/HIVCP_KEN.pdf (accessed 18.1.07)

² UNGASS Country Progress Report – Kenya. UNAIDS 2006. Geneva. Available at www.unaids.org/en/Regions_Countries/Countries/kenya.asp (accessed 18.1.07)

The commitment of the pharmacy profession in Kenya

At a participatory workshop on HIV/AIDS, held on World AIDS Day 1 December 2006 in Nairobi, hosted by the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya (PSK), 120 members of the pharmacy profession met to discuss the pandemic in Kenya.

The predominating message to come from these discussions was that pharmacists have the knowledge, skills and expertise which they believe could be more proactively applied to the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS in Kenya.

Furthermore, pharmacists of the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya (PSK) were united in their conviction to improve the health of all people living in Kenya. To this end, pharmacists are committed to assuming a greater public health role in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS specifically and in health promotion generally.

The Nairobi Statement is a compilation of recommendations made at the Workshop to expand the role of pharmacists in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in all sectors, and at all levels, of the healthcare system. Further discussions, both within the profession and with government, will be necessary to define these roles in greater detail. Also, The Nairobi Statement is a declaration by the pharmacists of Kenya to affirm the commitment made by 200 Commonwealth pharmacists at the CPA Conference in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, in 2003 and to implement the recommendations of The Nairobi Statement, as resources permit, to achieve beneficial health outcomes for the people of Kenya.

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 Kenya affirm 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 have the knowledge and expertise to provide authoritative information relating to 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 and sustainable antiretroviral therapy

Opportunities for pharmacists to contribute to the prevention & management of HIV/AIDS in Kenya

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

1. advocating for sustainable and cost-effective partnerships between public and private sector stakeholders to co-ordinate, facilitate and accelerate improved patient access to HIV/AIDS services
2. working strategically with the Ministry of Health, other related ministries and government agencies to provide an enabling environment for the implementation of policies aimed at long-term sustainability of Kenyan products and services for the treatment of HIV/AIDS
3. facilitating member access to up-to-date information on antiretroviral therapy
4. providing members with continuing education programs on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, especially those in rural and remote regions, or facilitating access to such programs provided by other institutions
5. developing mentorship programs for students and interns, especially those in rural and remote areas, to facilitate their access to information and to motivate their continuing involvement in professional activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention and management
6. promoting HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and providing relevant materials for members to undertake consumer and/or staff education and training activities, separately or in collaboration with other agencies
7. promoting the inclusion of specialist pharmacists in HIV/AIDS management teams, especially in the areas of clinical services and paediatrics
8. promoting pharmacist participation in scientific and operational research to evaluate and improve the quality of care and treatment for HIV/AIDS patients
9. nominating pharmacists to positions on national government and other professional Boards and Committees relating to HIV/AIDS
10. enforcing the Society's code on ethical prescribing and dispensing.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya will encourage its members to:

11. provide services without prejudice or discrimination and maintain patient confidentiality
12. use all available resources to remain informed and up-to-date on the treatment of HIV/AIDS in line with national treatment guidelines
13. train, or facilitate training, for support staff in the provision of HIV/AIDS treatment
14. participate fully in local, national and PSK community HIV/AIDS education campaigns
15. provide/negotiate/advocate for appropriate facilities for confidential patient counselling in pharmacies, clinics and workplaces
16. collaborate with other health care providers and government initiatives in implementing the "comprehensive care concept" in the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients.

The role of the pharmacist at community level

Given their accessibility, pharmacists can help reduce HIV transmission by informing, educating, and communicating with all members of the community by:

17. participating in awareness campaigns, e.g. World AIDS Day, to promote the pharmacist as an authoritative and accessible source of information on HIV/AIDS within the community
18. using daily opportunities to communicate prevention information to patients/consumers
19. providing information on voluntary counselling and testing services (VCT)
20. referring patients/consumers to VCT services to assist in early detection and diagnosis
21. providing consumer information on sexually transmitted infections
22. spreading prevention messages via all media outlets, eg. health advice columns, question and answer columns, talk-back radio sessions, TV interviews and community health announcements
23. participating in PLWA networks, community, school and faith-based activities
24. supporting other community-based HIV prevention programs.

Pharmacists can deliver quality treatment and care for HIV and AIDS patients by:

25. maintaining high standards of pharmacy practice and observing the Society's Code of Ethics
26. ensuring an up-to-date knowledge of the national HIV/AIDS treatment guidelines and using authoritative sources for up-dates on changes/advancements in therapy
27. working as members of multi-disciplinary healthcare teams
28. acquiring skills in patient counselling
29. providing quality pharmacist/patient interaction to promote adherence and optimise treatment outcomes (monitoring treatment; providing information on medicines, nutrition and opportunistic infections)
30. promoting holistic and wellness concepts to HIV positive patients and providing psychosocial support or referral to support service providers
31. treating tuberculosis (TB) patients within international standard treatment guidelines, or referring TB patients to appropriate treatment service facilities
32. treating opportunistic infections, including sexually transmitted infections, within treatment guidelines
33. maintaining patient medication records
34. recording and notifying incidents of observed drug resistance
35. undertaking courses in management of drug supply, including antiretrovirals

The role of the pharmacist at government level

Working with the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya, pharmacists can:

36. build working relationships with politicians and bureaucrats within Ministries
37. contribute to policy development and implementation as it relates to pharmacy practice, pharmacy education and public health
38. advocate for and assist government and relevant authorities to implement and enforce pharmacy legislative and regulatory requirements
39. advocate for and assist government and appropriate agencies to combat the importation and distribution of counterfeit and substandard medicines
40. advocate and negotiate with government to increase patient access to affordable and sustainable antiretroviral therapy, including preventive therapy (TB) & (PMTCT), treatment of sexually transmitted and opportunistic infections, laboratory reagents and supplies
41. work with universities to review curricula to ensure they meet the changing trends and requirements of pharmacy practice in Kenya
42. work with government to consider strategies and incentives to encourage pharmacists to work in rural and remote areas to ensure adequate resources for decentralisation of antiretroviral therapy.

The role of the pharmacist in collaboration with other agencies and organisations

Working collaboratively, the Pharmaceutical Society of Kenya and its members, can maximise impact by:

43. interacting with other health professionals in the design and implementation of HIV prevention strategies
44. interacting with networks of people living with HIV to better meet their needs and requirements
45. interacting with other health professionals to optimise treatment and care of HIV and AIDS patients, in both the hospital and community settings
46. joining with other health-related professional organisations in the hosting of interprofessional workshops, seminars, and CE courses
47. collaborating with major data collecting agencies to strengthen and improve systems for the strategic use of HIV/AIDS related information
48. nominating pharmacists to the boards of Councils representing professional bodies with aligned interests
49. promoting medical and pharmacy practice research with Kenyan institutes and universities.