

# PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

## The Colombo Statement on The Role of the Pharmacist in the Prevention & Management of HIV/AIDS & Tuberculosis in Sri Lanka

### Rationale

At the end of 2006 an estimated 7.2 million people in South and South-East Asia were living with HIV (overall adult prevalence 0.7%).<sup>1</sup> The region is experiencing long-standing epidemics together with diverse and rapidly growing epidemics. Sri Lanka is one of the few countries in the region where HIV infection has remained low (<0.1% adult prevalence with an estimated 5,000 people living with HIV<sup>2</sup>). However, Sri Lanka is vulnerable to an escalation of the epidemic given the network of population subgroups throughout the country whose high-risk behaviour could threaten current prevalence rates leading to a generalised epidemic.

Other socio-economic factors including increasing urbanisation, continuing conflict within parts of the country and increasing rates of alcoholism and substance abuse may lead to growing sub-populations at high risk of HIV infection.<sup>3</sup> Targeted prevention strategies and collaboration with civil society organisations in consumer health education delivered at community level, could help contain Sri Lanka's low rates of HIV infection.

At the end of 2004 the South and South-East Asian region accounted for 35% of global burden of tuberculosis (TB), with Sri Lanka experiencing a prevalence rate (all cases) of 91/100,000 pop/yr.<sup>4</sup> The National Tuberculosis Control Programme reports a case detection rate of 83% (WHO benchmark: 70%), a treatment success rate of 81% (WHO benchmark: 85%) and a default rate of 11%. Major challenges for the Programme, despite 88% DOTS (directly observed treatment, short course) coverage through a wide network of clinics to district level, is defaulter tracing, drug resistance surveillance and reaching marginalised populations with treatment and prevention services. Collaboration between the TB Programme and the National STD/AIDS Control Programme, especially in surveillance, testing and prevention services, could assist in maintaining Sri Lanka's low HIV prevalence rate and expand TB case detection.

Pharmacists can contribute their knowledge, skills and expertise in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and TB and are committed to working collaboratively with National Control Programmes in the support of nationwide goals. Pharmacists are accessible health professionals who maintain the respect of their communities through provision of confidential and equitable service and care.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation. [www.searo.who.int/en/Section10/Section18/Section348\\_9917.htm](http://www.searo.who.int/en/Section10/Section18/Section348_9917.htm) Accessed 14.7.07

<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS. [www.unaids.org/en/Regions/Countries/Countries/sri\\_lanka.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/Regions/Countries/Countries/sri_lanka.asp) Accessed 14.7.07

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation. [www.searo.who.int/EN/Section313/Section1524\\_6882.htm](http://www.searo.who.int/EN/Section313/Section1524_6882.htm) Accessed 14.7.07

<sup>4</sup> The Global Plan to Stop TB 2006-2015. [www.stoptb.org/globalplan/assets/documents/RP\\_SEAsia.pdf](http://www.stoptb.org/globalplan/assets/documents/RP_SEAsia.pdf) Accessed 14.7.07

## **The commitment of the pharmacy profession in Sri Lanka**

At a participatory workshop on HIV/AIDS and TB, held on 26 May 2007 in Colombo, and hosted by the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association and the Pharmaceutical Society of Sri Lanka, over 100 members of the pharmacy profession met to discuss the role of pharmacists in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and TB.

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 control of these communicable diseases in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, pharmacists of the Pharmaceutical Society of Sri Lanka were united in their commitment to the communities they serve. To this end, pharmacists will prepare for a greater public health role in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and TB specifically and in health promotion generally.

The Colombo Statement is a compilation of recommendations made at the Workshop to expand the role of pharmacists in all practice settings in the prevention of both these communicable diseases and in the continual improvement of accessibility to treatment and services by all members of the community in Sri Lanka. Further discussion, both within the profession and with government, will be necessary to define these roles in greater detail. In addition, The Colombo Statement is a declaration by the pharmacists of Sri Lanka to affirm the commitment made by 200 Commonwealth pharmacists at the CPA Conference in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 2003 and to implement the recommendations of The Colombo Statement, as resources permit, to achieve beneficial health outcomes for the people of Sri Lanka.

### **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**

- ◇ 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 both HIV/AIDS and TB
- ◇ 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 and antibiotic therapies

## **Increasing pharmacists' contribution to the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and TB in Sri Lanka**

### ***The Pharmaceutical Society of Sri Lanka will direct its efforts and resources towards:***

1. advocating for sustainable and cost-effective partnerships between public and private sector stakeholders to co-ordinate improved patient access to HIV/AIDS and TB services leading to increased case detection, provision of referral information for counselling, testing and diagnosis and authoritative information on treatment options
2. working strategically with the Ministry of Health, other related ministries and government agencies to provide an enabling environment for the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at long-term sustainability of service provision to HIV/AIDS and TB patients
3. facilitating member access to up-to-date information on antiretroviral therapy and international standards for TB care
4. providing members with continuing education programs on HIV/AIDS and TB prevention and treatment, with particular focus on access for rural members, or facilitating access to such programs provided by other institutions
5. promoting HIV/AIDS and TB 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
6. promoting the inclusion of pharmacists in HIV/AIDS and TB management teams, especially in the area of clinical services
7. nominating pharmacists to positions on national government and other professional Boards and Committees relating to HIV/AIDS and TB
8. nominating pharmacists to government/industry decision-making committees to advise on the registration, procurement and uninterrupted distribution of pharmaceutical supply
9. nominating pharmacists to government decision-making committees to provide evidence-based medicines expertise during the development of treatment guidelines
10. reinforcing the Society's code on ethical prescribing and dispensing

### ***The Pharmaceutical Society of Sri Lanka 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 evidence-based treatment of HIV/AIDS and TB in line with national and international treatment guidelines
13. train, or facilitate training, for support staff under supervision, in the provision of HIV/AIDS and TB treatment and information
14. participate fully in local, national and PSSSL-initiated community HIV/AIDS and TB education and awareness campaigns

## **The Role of the Pharmacist at Community Level**

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

17. participating in awareness campaigns, e.g. World AIDS Day, World TB Day, to promote the pharmacist as an authoritative and accessible source of information on HIV/AIDS and TB 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, including referral services
22. spreading prevention messages using all available media outlets: newspaper advice columns, talk-back radio, TV interviews and community health announcements
23. participating in community, school and faith-based activities
24. supporting other community-based HIV and TB prevention programs

### ***Pharmacists can deliver quality treatment and care for HIV and TB patients by:***

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

## **The Role of the Pharmacist at Government Level**

### ***Working with the Pharmaceutical Society of Sri Lanka, 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 (with special focus on reducing stigma and discrimination)
38. advocate for and assist government and relevant authorities in the development and use of evidence-based treatment guidelines
39. advocate for and assist government and appropriate agencies to combat the importation and distribution of counterfeit and substandard medicines
40. advocate for increased employment of pharmacists in drug procurement and distribution nationwide
41. advocate and negotiate with government to increase patient access to affordable and sustainable antiretroviral therapy, including preventive therapy for TB and antenatal patients where appropriate
42. advocate and negotiate with government to increase patient access to information and services in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases
43. work with universities to review curricula to ensure they meet the changing trends and requirements of pharmacy practice in Sri Lanka
44. work with government to formulate strategies and incentives to encourage pharmacists to work in rural areas to ensure adequate human resources for the delivery of quality treatment and care

## **The Role of the Pharmacist in Collaboration with other Agencies and Organisations**

### ***Working collaboratively, the Pharmaceutical Society of Sri Lanka and its members can maximise impact by:***

45. interacting with other health professionals in the design and implementation of HIV and TB prevention strategies
46. interacting with networks of people living with HIV to better meet their needs and requirements
47. interacting with other health professionals to optimise treatment and care of HIV and TB patients, in both hospital and community settings
48. joining with other health-related professional organisations in the hosting of interprofessional workshops, seminars and CE lectures
49. assisting major data collecting agencies to strengthen and improve systems for the strategic use of HIV/AIDS and TB related information
50. inviting other health-related professions to be represented on the Society's committees and negotiating for reciprocal representation
51. promoting medical and pharmacy practice research within Sri Lanka
52. involving pharmacy and other health-related student bodies in PSSSL activities