

## REPORT FROM THE LATIN-AMERICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR TO IUSTI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, Atlanta 2014

### **IUSTI Latin America organizing a Satellite Symposium within the STD 2014 Conference in Atlanta, June 9<sup>th</sup> 2014**

IUSTI Latin America together with PAHO, WHO, CDC and the government of Brazil are organizing the Symposium “STI Prevention and Control in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the objective of presenting the key programmatic aspects of STI prevention and control in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and provide an opportunity for experts working in STI prevention and control in LAC to share ideas, and debate common future directions. The symposium has been organized in 4 sessions: I. Elimination of Mother-to Child Transmission of Congenital Syphilis in the Americas; II. Laboratory Update: Quality Control and Quality Assurance of Syphilis Testing; III. Oral Poster Session and IV. Improving STI Surveillance Efforts.

### **16 Countries from Latin America met in Lima at a Workshop entitled “SHARING EXPERIENCES IN THE USE OF RAPID TESTS IN LATIN AMERICA FOR THE PREVENTION OF CONGENITAL SYPHILIS AND THE VERTICAL TRANSMISSION OF HIV”**

In February 20 and 21, 2014, representatives from ministries of health, academia and members of ALACITS from 16 Latin American Countries met in Lima Peru to review the technical aspects of the Dual rapid syphilis and HIV tests, share the experiences in the implementation of rapid syphilis tests, including dual tests, in several countries in Latin America and discuss challenges and opportunities and how as a region we could work together. We reviewed other aspects referred to the strategy for the elimination of congenital syphilis: e.g. treatment of maternal syphilis and myths regarding penicillin use, review the concepts of desensitization in cases of penicillin allergy, discuss algorithms for the introduction of the rapid tests, economic analysis, quality control issues etc.

The meeting also included representatives from International Cooperation Agencies and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Important conclusions have been drawn from the meeting and a plan for working together as a region.

### **Translation to Spanish of Editor’s choice articles from STI journal available for Latin American members**

IUSTI-LA/ALACITS in agreement with the editors of the STI Journal has been translating since August 2012 the Editor’s choice articles from the journal and making it available to the members through the web [www.alacits.org](http://www.alacits.org). Members received reminders through email about the new translated articles available.

### **Activities from countries**

#### ***Argentina lead by ASAIGO – ITS***

Dr. Miguel Tili is the actual president of the Latin American Association against STIs in Argentina (ASAIGO-ITS). They have been very active in training activities and advocacy for STI Control. An online course on Infections in Ob-Gyn and STIs is now available in Spanish at [www.asaigo.org.ar](http://www.asaigo.org.ar)

#### ***Uruguayan Society against STIs (SUCITS)***

Raquel Ballestes member of ALACITS and SUCITS reported several activities happening in Uruguay. The VII Journey of the Uruguayan Society against STIs brought professionals from different areas of Uruguay to Montevideo to discuss issues related to Herpes infections. The Clinical Guideline for the Diagnosis, Monitoring and treatment of Syphilis in Pregnant women and Congenital Syphilis was released by the Ministry of Health. Also the National Plan for Elimination of

Congenital Syphilis was launched with the support of the National Government and International Cooperation Agencies. Through a National Supreme Nº 316/012, Congenital Syphilis has been declared a risk for Public Health and a priority for the Ministry of Health.

### ***The Bolivian Association for the Control of STIs (ABITS) reports***

The National STI/HIV Program and ABITS have been working on prevention campaigns on STIs and HIV, starting from primary care centers but moving into communities e.g. regional festivities. Condoms have been promoted and distributed not only for general population but for vulnerable groups. Hepatitis B vaccination is now offered through the Ministry of Health.

Just recently, Bolivia launched the new Guideline for the Prevention of the Mother to child prevention transmission of HIV and syphilis.

### ***Panama, working with high risk populations (PEMAR)***

Dr. Aurelio Nuñez, responsible of the Panama STI Program and member of ALACITS, has been working actively creating the Friendly Clinics for high risk populations (PEMAR) (FSW, MSM and Trans populations) in the provinces of Panamá, Colón y Chiriquí. They offer HIV, syphilis, GC and BV testing with results on the same day and stigma free care. Panama is also working in a revision of the HIV law; a new diagnostic algorithm for HIV; revision of the national guidelines for STIs; studies directed to understand better high risk populations: e.g. KAPs and estimations of the size of the population. Cost estimations of treatment as prevention are also being performed.

### ***Chile: Working towards the elimination of Congenital Syphilis and more ...***

The country has signed a compromise for the elimination of Congenital Syphilis and the reduction of the vertical transmission of HIV. Regional committees are working in guidelines, clinical services, monitoring etc.

The government also announced the commitment to start HPV vaccination in 2014 for girls 9 years old through schools. The goal is to reach 125,000 girls with a schedule of 2 doses in a period of 12 months during the school year.

### ***Honduras: Studies on STIS and HIV in Indigenous populations: Garifuna Indians***

In 2012 Honduras started a Prevalence study on STIs and HIV and sexual behavior in the garifuna populations, an afrodescendant group in Honduras. The results were presented in November 2013. The study included rural and urban populations. Reports of condom use in the last sexual intercourse with casual partners was over 70% in all participants. Condom use with stable partners was 40% in urban areas and 15% in rural zones. Only one in three women has had and HIV test during pregnancy. Reports of STIs symptoms were very high, 39% and 31% rural and urban women and 17% and 11% in rural and urban men respectively.

### ***Peru: Surveillance on GC resistance***

Gonorrhoea (GC) is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) and a challenge due to emergence of resistant strains. Peru started a GC antibiotic surveillance system in the 1990s with technical support of the Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Program from WHO. However data collection has been limited. Through the PREVEN Study data GC strains collected have shown with very high levels of resistance to cipro, which is still the recommended treatment of GC infections in Peru. Led by the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH) in coordination with the National STI/ HIV Program, and regional governments in Peru, with the presence of Dr. Joan Dillon, we had a workshop to discuss the issues on GC resistance, review the available data, review national STI guidelines and plan how to create a functional surveillance system for GC in the country.