

Meeting Report
8th Semi-annual Global TB Community Advisory Board Meeting

May 20–22, 2015
New York, New York, USA

**TB CAB Meeting in New York City
20–22 May 2015**

Diagnostics Training

Dr. Madhukar Pai from McGill University led the TB CAB training on diagnostics and advocacy. He discussed both diagnostic technology- and health systems-related issues contributing to delayed diagnosis for TB, and noted the importance of early and accurate diagnosis to reducing TB transmission and morbidity and mortality. The group learned about the role and effectiveness of existing TB diagnostic tools, including smear, nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs), culture, interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs), tuberculin skin tests (TSTs), and chest X-rays; and discussed new TB tests in development and remaining research needs. Following the training, Madhu, the TB CAB's Khairunisa Suleiman, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Access Campaign Scientific Advisor Martina Casenghi summarized priority issues in TB diagnostics and discussed specific areas of potential relevance and interest for ongoing and future advocacy and attention. An official TB CAB diagnostics work group (DXWG) was formed to advance the discussed priorities, including creating an activist's guide to TB diagnostics.

TB and Diabetes Training

Dr. Joe Burzynski, director of the TB Program at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene introduced the TB CAB to diabetes, its epidemiology, and its affect on immune processes and the resulting implications for individual susceptibility to TB infection and progression to TB disease. He also discussed the needs of TB patients living with diabetes, potential overlapping toxicities with TB drugs, and outstanding research questions related to TB and diabetes. The TB CAB formed a comorbidities work group to take forward identified advocacy and research priorities.

Accessible Pricing Strategies for HCV and TB Treatments

Karyn Kaplan, Treatment Action Group's (TAG's) International Hepatitis/HIV Policy and Advocacy Director gave an overview of the global hepatitis C epidemic, tools recently developed, and ongoing treatment access issues faced by communities around the world. She also walked the TB CAB through some of the approaches hepatitis C treatment activists are taking to reduce drug prices and improve access. Karyn discussed the utility of comparing country pricing lists when leveraging governments to act and the importance of reforming existing patent laws, filing patent oppositions, exercising compulsory licensing, and encouraging local production of generic medications to improve access to hepatitis C treatment.

Sharonann Lynch, HIV and TB Policy Advisor at MSF Access Campaign, provided a review of TB access issues related to prices of drugs to treat DR-TB. Sharonann presented new data on estimated DR-TB drug production costs, and highlighted potential threats to ongoing efforts to expand and scale up DR-TB treatment access. The session closed with a review of potential strategies for reducing DR-TB drug prices and expanding access. TAG's TB/HIV Project Director and TB CAB member, Erica Lessem led a follow-on TB CAB discussion of TB drug

pricing and access priority issues and outlined ideas for future work to advance access to TB drugs for research and programs.

Pregnant Women in TB Trials

Dr. Amita Gupta from the Johns Hopkins University provided training on TB in pregnant women– a population that continues to be largely neglected in the context of TB trials. Amita reviewed immune system and other physiological changes during pregnancy that affect TB risk, disease presentation, and bioavailability of TB medications. She discussed gaps in knowledge for the diagnosis and treatment of TB in pregnant women, outlined research underway or planned to address some of these gaps, and highlighted advocacy areas potentially relevant and of interest to the TB CAB. The TB CAB formed a pediatrics and pregnancy work group to take forward identified advocacy and research priorities.

Activism planning

Marcus Low, TB CAB member and head of policy at Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), introduced the TB CAB to issues advocates are facing in South Africa, highlighting those with potential international applicability and reach. He noted the need to include researchers and bureaucrats in advocacy to really change the way the TB world works. TB CAB members then put forward ideas for future advocacy actions.

TB CAB Business and Governance

To help orient new members, the TB CAB reviewed standard group processes, member expectations, our confidentiality policy, and the existing member list. The TB CAB Governance and Membership Committee (GMC) presented a summary of findings from a gap analysis and obtained consensus from the group to open a call for a limited number of new members to fill identified gaps in member areas of expertise and geographical representation. The TB CAB also discussed the need to better coordinate community participation in external meetings and processes for handling future requests for TB CAB representation.

The next meeting will be held 29 November–1 December 2015 in Cape Town before the Union Conference.