Innovations in Leprosy Prophylaxis: Current Evidence and Upcoming Trials

Session Date: Friday, October 26

Session Time: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Session Location: Conde, 3rd Floor

Session Description: Contacts of leprosy patients have an elevated risk of developing leprosy themselves. A number of innovative approaches to improve the efficacy of chemo- and immunoprophylaxis are being explored. The risk reduction conferred by the administration of a single dose of rifampicin to the contacts of newly diagnosed leprosy patients has been established beyond doubt. Strong evidence also suggests a lower risk of leprosy in BCG vaccinees. However, the operationalization of this intervention in the face of weak and diverse health systems has only recently been approached. The Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (LPEP) program has been designed to establish the feasibility of integrating chemoprophylaxis with a single dose of rifampicin for household, neighbor and social contacts of newly diagnosed leprosy patients across eight different countries and their health systems on three continents. While the intervention has been demonstrated to be well accepted by most leprosy patients and their contacts, and has invigorated contact tracing and leprosy control at local level, considerable logistical challenges have been identified, particularly with regard to BCG vaccination of adults and the tracing of social contacts. Also, reservations persist to integrate the intervention into leprosy control program routines. Innovations with regard to the definition, tracing and selection of contacts, and the prophylactic regimen, will soon be explored in three large trials. The focus is on the identification of contacts at particular risk of developing leprosy, more potent chemoprophylactic regimens than single-dose rifampicin, and the combination of chemo- with immunoprophylaxis, either using BCG or a newly developed defined leprosy vaccine. Studies focusing on leprosy prophylaxis tend to be long-term, expensive and logistically challenging, with related issues faced by different designs but different experience depending on the study setting. Hence, there is considerable scope for exchange between sites and studies to improve the quality of ongoing and future studies based available experience.

Session Chairs: Arielle Cavalliero, Novartis Foundation
Peter Steinmann, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute

Session Rapporteur: David Addiss

AGENDA

Leprosy Post Exposure Prophylaxis (LPEP) Program	*Arielle Cavaliero*

PEP ++ Program	*Wim van Brakel*
EDCTP Comoros & Madagascar	*Epco Hasker*
Lepvax	*Steven Reed*
Modeling of Leprosy Prophylaxis	*David Blok*
Coffee Break	2:30 – 3:00pm
Discussion	*Arielle Cavaliero and Peter Steinmann*