

September 2007

## Training Course on Surveillance of Sexually Transmitted Infections

A one week training course on STI surveillance was held in London in September. The course was run by members of the ESSTI network, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the Knowledge Hub for Capacity Building in HIV/AIDS Surveillance at the School of Public Health "Andrija Stampar" in Croatia. As well as ESSTI members teaching on the course, we were very lucky to have Dr Kevin Fenton from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, USA who delivered some great sessions. Kevin initially led the development of the ESSTI network and was programme lead for the first phase of the ESSTI project. Together with Kevin, Dr Ivana Bozicevic from the University of Zagreb

was also kind enough to come to London and teach on the course that she and Kevin initially developed. The course was attended by 14 participants from ESSTI-collaborating countries and consisted of lectures, case studies and a protocol development exercise. The feedback from the course was very positive. The participants particularly enjoyed learning about STI surveillance from everyone's home countries, and meeting colleagues in the field of STI surveillance. The course offered the perfect forum to discuss differences in STI surveillance across Europe and will allow participants to apply their learning to their own country settings.

## 17th Meeting of the International Society for STD Research, Seattle 2007

There was a strong ESSTI presence at the ISSTD meeting in Seattle during the summer. Cathy Ison co-chaired a successful session with Marita van de Laar from ECDC entitled 'New Challenges and Threats for HIV/STI Control in the European Union'. There were excellent informative presentations by Marita van de Laar, Cathy Ison, Anthony Nardone, Anders Blaxhult and Emma Savage, all of whom are ESSTI members. Michelle Cole talked about Euro-GASP at the International Collaboration of Gonococci meeting which preceded the main conference, whilst Cathy presented European gonococcal antimicrobial resistance data at a sponsored symposium. The meeting was a great opportunity to discuss STIs in Europe and meet new potential network members and thus expand the ESSTI network.

Cathy, who is the current ESSTI project lead, took over as president of ISSTD and will bring this prestigious international meeting to London in June 2009. We again plan to have a strong ESSTI presence and hope that many of you will be able to join us in London 2009 at this fantastic meeting.

## Update on new variant of Bgk lxch s bgnl shr

In response to the emergence in 2006 of a new variant of *Chlamydia trachomatis* in Sweden, as reported in ESSTI newsletter no. 4, ESSTI and ECDC assessed the potential spread of this variant by circulating a questionnaire. Responses have now been received from 21 countries, of which 19 could provide data. The variant has been detected in only three countries – Ireland, Norway, and Denmark. It has therefore been concluded that there is currently no evidence that the variant has spread widely

across Europe. However, the variant strain has been reported in between 10% and 65% of infected patients in Sweden<sup>1, 2</sup>. It is too early to tell whether the variant will remain confined to Sweden or whether the number of cases will significantly increase. Enhanced surveillance will need to be continued to address these concerns. The information received from this survey has now been published in *Eurosurveillance* monthly<sup>3</sup>.

1. Ripa T., Nilsson PA. A *Chlamydia trachomatis* strain with a 377-bp deletion in the cryptic plasmid causing false-negative nucleic acid amplification tests. *Sex Transm Dis.* 2007;34:255-6.
2. Nordvik M, Liljeros F, Österlund A and Herrmann B. Spatial bridges and the spread of chlamydia; The case of a county in Sweden. *Sex Transm Dis* 2007; 34:47-53.
3. Savage E, Ison C, Van de Laar M, European Surveillance of Sexually Transmitted Infections (ESSTI). Results of a Europe-wide investigation to assess the presence of a new variant of *Chlamydia trachomatis*. *Euro Surveill* 2007;12(10) [Epub ahead of print]. Available online: [www.eurosurveillance.org/em/v12n10/1210-222.asp](http://www.eurosurveillance.org/em/v12n10/1210-222.asp)

### ESSTI Newsletter

If you have an article or a short news piece that you would like included in future editions of this newsletter please contact Edmund Donovan at [essti@hpa.org.uk](mailto:essti@hpa.org.uk).

# Microbiology update

## Sentinel surveillance of antimicrobial resistance in *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*

A big thank you to all participating laboratories that have collected *N. gonorrhoeae* strains for the sentinel surveillance study. The collection period was from June to August 2007; however the time period has been extended to allow

those centres with low collection rates to accumulate more strains. Over the next few weeks Michelle will arrange for the strains to be sent to one of three centres; Vienna, Copenhagen or London where the strains will be tested against a range of

therapeutic antimicrobials. Michelle will be performing susceptibility testing in London, and Maria Haller and Lene Berthelsen will be performing the testing in Vienna and Copenhagen respectively. The results will determine the prevalence of antimicrobial resistance across Europe and help inform treatment guidelines.

## Agenda for ESSTI collaborative group meeting, 26-27 November 2007

### Monday 26th November

Time	Activity
9.00	Welcome and Coffee
9.30 - 12.00	Symposium
12.00	Lunch
13.00 - 14.30	Update on ESSTI 2007
14.30 - 16.00	ESSTI and ECDC
16.00	Coffee
16.15 - 18.00	TESSy database
20.00	Dinner

### Tuesday 27th November

Time	Activity
8.30	Coffee
9.00 - 11.30	Group Sessions Session 1: Surveillance Session 2: Microbiology
11.30	Coffee
11.50 - 12.50	Feedback from Group Sessions
12.50 - 13.20	Bringing it all together: Summary of ESSTI activities for 2008
13.20	Lunch
14.00	Departure

## QA Panel

The results from all the laboratories were received back to the ESSTI hub in July. Overall intra and inter-laboratory concordance has been calculated, as well as the overall consensus. These results will shortly be emailed to participants and presented at the next collaborative group meeting in Vienna.

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## Future STI meetings

15th International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections (Asia Pacific Congress) Dubai, 3-6 February 2008 [www.iusti.ae](http://www.iusti.ae)

3rd Joint BASHH-ASTDA Conference 'Converging Approaches in STI control and Reproductive Health'. New York, USA 7-10 May 2008. [www.bashh.org](http://www.bashh.org)

18th International Society for STD Research (ISSTD). London, 28 June -1 July 2009 [www.isstdlondon2009.com](http://www.isstdlondon2009.com)

11th IUSTI World Congress Africa 2009 Cape Town, South Africa 9-12 November 2009 [www.iusti.org](http://www.iusti.org)