



MEDIA ADVISORY

UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S NEW AND WHAT'S HOT IN INFECTIOUS DISEASES

February 28, 2008 (VANCOUVER) – Canada's leading clinical and medical microbiologists and infectious disease specialists will gather in Vancouver, BC, on March 1, 2008, starting at 8:00 am, to share the latest findings from research on antibiotic resistance, mumps outbreaks, new drug treatment for Hepatitis B, and new classes of antiretrovirals for HIV treatment. Part of the AMMI Canada - CACMID Annual Conference 2008, their discussions will focus on this most pressing public health issue with specific attention to:

- **Antimicrobial Stewardship Programs** – Canadian healthcare practitioners are increasingly recognizing the importance of good antimicrobial stewardship as they are faced with the problems of escalating antibiotic resistance, difficult-to-treat infections and slowed new drug development. Participants will consider the tools available in Canada that would help to optimize antimicrobial use.
- **Epidemiology of Mumps** – Acting on concerns about re-emerging mumps in Canada, participants will discuss how Canada will manage the current mumps outbreaks, and review the lessons learned during this outbreak including the limitations of diagnostic testing.
- **New drug treatment to Hepatitis B** – Participants will hear about encouraging new therapeutics and approaches in the assessment, management and treatment of Hepatitis B.
- **New drugs, new hope for HIV** – Participants will hear encouraging results and progress reports from leading researchers concerning the development of a new class of antiretroviral drugs, offering hope to patients with drug-resistant strains of the HIV virus.

All educational sessions, clinical vignettes and symposia are open to media. The Annual Conference is organized by the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada (www.ammi.ca) and the Canadian Association for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (www.cacmid.ca).

About Antimicrobial Stewardship

Antimicrobial Stewardship describes programs and policies that assist health care providers to use antimicrobials more wisely. The primary goals of such programs are to reduce antimicrobial resistance and improve patient care. In the hospital, it entails a system of data collection methods and antimicrobial use guidelines which promote the optimal selection, dosing and duration of prescribed antibiotics. The implementation of Antimicrobial Stewardship should prevent or slow down the emergence of resistance among microorganisms.

Antimicrobial resistance is a substantial threat to public health in Canada. The extent of antimicrobial overuse is exemplified in the outpatient setting by the therapy of respiratory tract infections. Approximately 50 per cent of upper respiratory tract infections and 80 per cent of acute bronchitis are treated with antibiotics, despite evidence that antibiotics have little impact in the resolution or outcome of these predominantly viral illnesses.

About Mumps

Mumps is an acute viral illness characterized by fever and swelling of salivary glands under the jaw and in the cheeks. Although usually a mild to moderate childhood disease, complications may include deafness and meningitis. In adolescent and adult males, orchitis (painful inflammation of one or both testes), may occur. The mumps virus is spread by direct contact with or inhalation of the secretions from an infected person's nose or mouth, such as saliva contact and airborne respiratory droplets.

Cases of mumps have declined significantly in Canada since the introduction of vaccination programs against the disease in the early 1970s. However, outbreaks have occurred in 2006 and 2007 focused in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with cases also occurring in other provinces too. In late 2007/early 2008, there has also been a mumps outbreak in Alberta.

About Hepatitis B and treatment

Hepatitis B is considered a "silent infection" because most people don't have symptoms when they are first infected. Symptoms could include skin turning yellow (this is called "jaundice").

Around 90 per cent of healthy adults who are infected with Hepatitis B will "recover" from the virus within six months. Another 10 per cent of infected adults are diagnosed as being "chronic carriers" of the virus as it stays in their blood and liver, and they are able to pass it on to others. Less than 1 per cent of infected adults can have a severe reaction and die from liver failure within several weeks.

Today, there are promising new treatment for people living with chronic hepatitis that can slow down liver damage caused by the virus. Several drugs are in the experimental stage, while others are being tested in the laboratory or in small groups of people.

About HIV infection and treatment

The advent of HAART in the 1990s had a major impact on the treatment of HIV. While unable to eliminate the virus from the body, the use of combinations of drugs from different classes proved effective in reducing symptoms, improving immune status, and delaying the onset of AIDS.

However, over time some infected individuals develop drug resistance and become unresponsive to all the drugs in a particular class. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as many as 20 per cent of people in North America and Europe are infected with strains of HIV resistant to at least one class of antiretroviral drug.

The development of novel therapies is proving to be a challenge and is focusing on novel mechanisms of action. Many emerging HIV therapies have reached clinical development.

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For more information about the AMMI Canada - CACMID Annual Conference 2008 go to www.ammi.ca/annual_conference.

To pre-register for the Conference or to request an interview, please contact:

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