

## Report from inaugural press conference of the project „Prevention of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infections” which will be implemented in Poland from 2012 to 2016.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August in Polish Press Agency took place inaugural conference of the “Prevention of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infections” Project, supported by a grant from Switzerland through the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged European Union and Minister of Health of Republic of Poland.

Project will be implement from 2012 to 2016, and its total estimate cost amounted 4.669.907 CHF, of which:

- 1) amount of 3.969.421 CHF, which is 85% of all eligible costs will be a support of Swiss Side,
- 2) amount of 700.486 CHF, which is 15% of all eligible costs will be national support.

The aim of the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme (SPCP), under which the agreement on realization of the Project was signed, is to reduce social and economics differences in Poland between dynamic developing areas and poorly developing suburban areas, called areas of geographical concentration (voivodeships: Lublin voivodeship, Subcarpathian voivodeship, Swietokrzyskie voivodeship, Lesser Poland voivodeship).

Financial assets within the SPCP make possible a nationwide health promotion of healthy lifestyle, health education and prevention of infectious diseases.

The press conference was opened and moderated by professor Mirosław J. Wysocki, Director of the National Institute of Public Health - National Institute of Hygiene (NIPH-NIH).

Among the invited honorary guests there were:

- 1) Simon Geissbühler - deputy Ambassador of Switzerland,
- 2) Aleksandra Chmielewska - Office of the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme,
- 3) Marek Posobkiewicz - Chief Sanitary Inspector,
- 4) Professor Andrzej Zieliński - National Consultant for Epidemiology, Department of Epidemiology NIPH-NIH,
- 5) Paulina Miśkiewicz - Office Director of the WHO Representative in Warsaw,
- 6) Professor Piotr Książek - Medical University in Lublin,

- 7) Irmina Nikiel - State District Sanitary Inspector in Lublin,
- 8) Janusz Sierostawski - Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Warsaw,
- 9) Magdalena Rosińska, PhD - Department of Epidemiology NIPH-NIH,
- 10) Professor Kazimierz Madaliński - Department of Virology NIPH-NIH,
- 11) Anita Gębska-Kuczerowska, PhD - Department of Health Promotion and Postgraduate NIPH-NIH,
- 12) Michał Ilnicki - Head of the Department of Infection Prevention and Combating Infectious Diseases and Human, Chief Sanitary Inspectorate.

During the press conference the key concepts of the Project "Prevention of HCV infection" were presented. This will be the first such project in Poland, which will systematize public health interventions aiming at preventing the spread HCV in Poland as well as gather up-to date evidence for further programming. Based on that, the assumptions for the "National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Infection HCV for the years 2015-2020" will be developed.

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from the left: Aleksandra Chmielewska - Office of the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme;  
 Simon Geissbühler - Deputy Ambassador of Switzerland;  
 Professor Mirosław J. Wysocki, Director of the NIZP-PZH;  
 Professor. Andrzej Zieliński - National Consultant for Epidemiology;  
 Marek Posobkiewicz - Chief Sanitary Inspector,  
 Paulina Miśkiewicz - Office Director of the WHO in Warsaw

In conference took part 59 participants. Among invited guests, also were present representatives of medical society - The Polish Chamber of Physicians and the National Chamber of Laboratory Diagnosticians and social organizations, foundations (Urszula Jaworska Foundation) and opinion leaders (Mr Paweł Kruś, chairman of Kapituła Nagrody Zaufania and creator of Nagroda Zaufania "Złoty OTIS").



National Institute of public Health - National Institute of Hygiene



Institute of psychiatry and Neurology in Warsaw



Medical University in Lublin



Main Sanitary Inspectorate



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Chairwoman of National Chamber of Laboratory Diagnosticians - Elżbieta Puacz, PhD

Participants of the press conference were asking numerous questions to speakers expressed their expectations for the program.

The project “Prevention of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infections” consists of five sub-projects, which in their assumption, are addressed to different social groups of infection risk. Within the scope every sub-project, specific goals and tasks will be executed.

The manager of the 1<sup>st</sup> Project is Magdalena Rosińska, PhD, Department of



Photo: J.L. Jaworski

Magdalena Rosińska, PhD

Epidemiology NIPH-NIH. The aim of the 1st Project is a rationalization of the HCV diagnostics, estimate HCV occurrence in population and analyse factors related to HCV occurrence. From research conducted by Magdalena Rosińska, we will learn about: how many people are infected with HCV in Poland? What is the most common route of HCV infection? In research will participate people randomly choose from the whole Poland. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> Project, people diagnosed with HCV and their families.

During the press conference Rosińska emphasized:

- The earlier diagnosis of HCV, increase the effectiveness of treatment.
- Awareness of common routes of infection reduce an infection oh other people.
- Acquaintance of the epidemiology helps adjust prevention activities.

**Second Project** is focused on reduction of HCV infections among the IDU - injecting drug users. The manager of this project is Janusz Sierostawski from the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Warsaw.



Photo: J.L. Jaworski

Janusz Sierostawski

This project consists of the following stages:

1. Assessment of the risk:
  - 1) Estimate number of people infected with HCV among IDU
  - 2) Identification of risk factors and protective factors - building a risk model.
2. Preparation of a model prevention program.

The aim of that project is to describe, by research (interviews):

- ✓ Effective channels to reach the target group (IDU)
- ✓ Way of communication (language, methods of reasoning, etc.)
- ✓ Conditions of prevention messages acceptance.
- ✓ Create an optimal preventive package (scripts, materials).

Prevention Program testing - based on experimental research.

The final aim of **2nd Project** is dissemination and implementation to standard procedure created preventing solutions.



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Professor Kazimierz Madaliński

The next, **3rd Project** is a pilot scheme of examination of pregnant women diagnosed with HCV, which will be managing by Professor Kazimierz Madaliński, Department of Virology NIPH-NIH.

The main objective of the project is to improve the prevention of vertical transmission of HCV infections in Poland and the prevention of adverse clinical consequences at children's vertically infected with the virus. The project will be implemented in the following voivodeships: Masovian, Kuyavan-Pomeranian, Lublin, Świętokrzyskie, Lesser Poland.

The 4th Project will focus on the qualitative analysis of a HCV infection risk in light of medical procedures in chosen medical facilities - managing by Professor Piotr Książek, Medical University in Lublin.

#### Main goals of the 4th Project:



- Establish procedures and behaviors related or potentially related to an increased risk of HCV transmission in medical facilities in Polish conditions.
- Modernization and modification of safety at work principles for medical personnel.
- Modification of control and supervision procedures used by sanitary service in medical facilities.

This project will be implemented in Lubelskie, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie voivodeships.

#### Final Beneficiaries:

- ✓ Sanitary services (they do not only control medical facilities, but also conduct training)
- ✓ Interested medical facilities, medical personnel training institutions in the control of hospital-acquired infections,
- ✓ Patients benefiting from Polish health care.

The 5th Project is the education for staff from chosen occupations with increased risk of blood infections and whole society for prevention (HCV, HBV, HIV) - managed by Anita Gębska-Kuczerowska, PhD, Department of Health Promotion and Postgraduate NIPH-NIH.

#### Goals of the project:

- Improving the efficiency of infection prevention and combating the spread of infections in the medical facilities - by improving the knowledge about



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Anita Gębska-Kuczerowska,

epidemiology of infections and skills of prevention in infection in the field of medical procedures.

- Improving the efficiency of prevention of infections spread via haematogenous route , in areas of increased risk of transmission, i.e. outside the health sector such as beauty salons, barbershops, tattoo studios, etc.
- Increase public awareness of HCV infection and promote an active attitude to service providers in the field to ensure the proper preventive measures.
- Anti-stigmatization of infected patients.

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