



A global report on care of non-communicable diseases in sub Saharan Africa by The Union and its partners to be published by the Public Library of Science

Paris, France – 10 June, 2008 – The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), an international organisation established in 1920 to fight tuberculosis and promote lung health worldwide, has prepared a report, published in PLoS Medicine by the Public Library of Science (PLoS), on managing diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, epilepsy and other non-communicable diseases in sub-Saharan Africa that will provide lessons for treating patients worldwide.

Prof. Donald Enarson, Senior Advisor at The Union and co-author of the study, declared: *“In terms of drug availability, sub-Saharan Africa faces frequent stock interruptions of essential medication for managing these non-communicable diseases, and with a growing amount of diabetes and its complications, many patients have extremely short life expectancies in this part of Africa. Patients with asthma are still receiving sub-standard care and have poor access to essential medications. Within a country, new programmes for non-communicable diseases should be piloted in one or two facilities, and lessons learnt from these facilities can be used to assist national roll-out within the public sector.”*

Prof Anthony Harries, Senior Advisor at The Union and co-author of this study, added: *“Through better management of patients with non-communicable diseases, lives could be saved by adopting standardised approaches that identify, treat, supervise and allow follow-up of these patients. Health care professionals and policy makers should learn from TB control programmes that have gained political commitment; provide diagnosis using simple testing, treatment with a standardised course of medications, an uninterrupted supply of these medications and a monitoring and evaluation system.”*

The **Public Library of Science**, a recognised non-profit organisation of scientists and physicians committed to making the world's scientific and medical literature a freely available public resource and a medical reference, has selected this report by The Union and its partners to be published in its June issue, saying that better management can be achieved in treating non-communicable diseases by learning from the success of TB control programmes.

Ultimately, this study is expected to have an enormous impact on learning more about better management of high blood pressure, diabetes, strokes, asthma, epilepsy and mental illnesses, which are a growing burden in sub-Saharan Africa, where poor health care delivery systems and unavailability of drugs are in urgent need of improvement.

The Union assists countries in their efforts to improve health services by providing permanent on-site technical assistance; conducting operational research with its network of international experts in low- and middle-income countries, and offering international training courses and conferences worldwide. It also conducts extensive field work while providing strong management tools to support programmes and improve policies.

To join The Union in promoting its programmes and policies, please visit our website: www.iuatld.org

To read the full article, please link to: <http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pmed.0050124>

About The Union

The *International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* (The Union), is the only international voluntary scientific organisation with partners in all regions providing a neutral platform to fight TB, HIV, asthma, tobacco and lung disease. The Union was established in 1920 as a federation of national associations, and today provides direct field assistance to over 75 countries, conducts clinical trials and organises international conferences and training courses. It also publishes *The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* (IJTLD), the reference journal for clinical research and epidemiological studies on tuberculosis. Among its international initiatives, it manages the grants programme for the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use, as well as the FIDELIS Fund for Innovative DOTS Expansion through Local Initiatives to Stop TB, and many others.

For further information, please visit our web site at: www.iuatld.org

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