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Report

11th Scientific Symposium on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day, March 21 and 22, 2017, "Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in Eastern Europe – political and practical aspects of TB control"

The biggest challenge in fighting tuberculosis in the WHO-European Region is the fast growing rate of multidrug-resistant strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in the region. Multidrug-resistance, aggravated by an emerging HIV-epidemic in many of the successor states of the former Soviet Union, counteracts all efforts to efficiently control tuberculosis. In fact, we more and more lose control, and tuberculosis already gets virtually untreatable in some areas of our WHO-European Region. Thus, the development of new drugs and novel vaccine candidates becomes more and more urgent.

To address these challenges, Koch Mechnikov Forum (KMF) and its partners in the Russian Federation initiated scientific collaborative projects in the fields of immunology, medical microbiology, epidemiology and public health. The first scientific partnership dates back to November 2001 and is still active: The characterization of host pathogen interactions in human tuberculous lung tissue is of great importance to better understand immunological processes that are correlated with protection against infection or disease. The Central Tuberculosis Research Institute in Moscow is specialized in dissecting human lung tissue and combine human and animal model approaches. Besides immunology, various projects with partners in St. Petersburg, Smolensk, Yekaterinburg, Toms and Novosibirsk aimed and

still aim at addressing problems in TB diagnostics, in case notification and infection epidemiology. KMF and its partners developed a scientific network and a variety of publications.

As a platform for scientific exchange, the symposium on World Tuberculosis Day has been launched in March 2007. The first symposium was organized to prepare the Ministerial Forum on Tuberculosis in Berlin in October 2007 which then adopted the so-called Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis. The symposia following the first year 2007 which also commemorated the 125th anniversary of Robert Koch's famous lecture "Ueber Tuberculose" each had a specific scientific focus:

- 2007 125th anniversary of Koch's lecture and preparation of the Ministerial Forum and the Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis;
- 2008 Current research topics in diagnostics, therapy and prevention;
- 2009 Public health intervention in TB control;
- 2010 Exchange of expertise in TB control between Eastern Europe and South Africa;
- 2011 Childhood tuberculosis;
- 2012 Evaluation of progress made in TB control four years after the adoption of the Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis;
- 2013 Public private partnerships in diagnostics, therapy and prevention of TB;
- 2014 HIV-TB-comorbidity in different WHO world regions;
- 2015 Public health interventions and vaccine development; in collaboration with Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative, TBVI;
- 2016 TB and migration

Today, KMF's TB symposium on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day is a well-established scientific meeting with both interactions among TB experts and scientists as well as with representatives of politics, public private partnerships, and other decision makers including those from WHO. The 11th symposium in March 2017 was opened by Vladimir Grinin, ambassador of the Russian Federation to Germany, highlighting the importance of joint Russian-German projects in TB control even in times of political turbulences.

State-of-the-art lectures followed, given by Lucica Ditiu, executive director of the Stop TB Partnership, about global perspectives of TB control; Martin van den Boom, WHO European Office, about the newest figures of TB in the WHO European Region; Beatrijs Stickers, KNCV, about current aspects of TB advocacy; and Basel Karo, RKI, about the results of a study on TB therapy in the EU. The following two sessions contained best-practice examples of TB control presented by the partners of KMF in Russia, Moldova, Belarus and Moldova.

Session 4 was organized together with the Global TB Caucus (www.globaltbcaucus.org), a global organization of parliamentarians dedicated to support the fight against TB. The session was opened by the former German Federal President Christian Wulff. Members of Parliament from the United Kingdom, Saudi-Arabia and India presented their approaches to fight TB. At the end of the session, a joint declaration of the parliamentarians was presented to be submitted to the German minister of health Hermann Gröhe, asking for integrating MDR-TB into the G20 Summit discussion of Antimicrobial Resistances, AMR. The 11th TB Symposium ended with state-of-the-art presentations on diagnostics and therapy, put forward also by private company partners such as Becton Dickinson Diagnostics and Otsuka.

Outlook

The results of this year's 11th TB Symposium will be reported directly to the World Health Summit in Berlin in October 2017. There, the political and scientific discussions will be continued in an own workshop.

The paper of the parliamentarians of the Global TB Caucus will be supported by KMF and Akkon University together with many other NGOs in the field of TB research and control. Results of the G20 Summit with respect to joint actions in TB control will be followed up as well.

The 11th TB Symposium, the workshop at the World Health Summit and various other meetings and conferences (among those the VI. Congress of Phthisiatrists in the Russian Federation) will prepare the First Global Ministerial Conference entitled "Ending Tuberculosis in the Sustainable Development Era: A Multisectoral Response" in Moscow in November 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timm Ulrichs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.