UN Secretary General visits Cambodia's first methadone clinic
On 28 October 2010, The UN Secretary General (UNSG), Ban Ki-moon, visited Cambodia's first methadone maintenance therapy (MMT) clinic in Central Phnom Penh as part of a two-day visit to the Kingdom. During his visit, the UNSG and his wife helped with the administration of methadone to six patients at the clinic. Ban Ki-moon commended the Government of Cambodia for launching the programme and acknowledged the importance of such a program for patients as well as for the larger community. More info

WHO review of psychoactive substances
In January 2010 WHO's Executive Board adopted a revised version of the Guidelines for the WHO Review of Psychoactive Substances for International Control. These guidelines govern the evaluation of substances for WHO’s recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as required by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971.
Persisting pain in children
From 22 - 26 March 2010, the Guidelines Development Group for the WHO Guidelines on Pharmacological Treatment of Persisting Pain in Children with Medical Illnesses convened in the Rockefeller Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy. The group discussed evidence and recommendations on pharmacological interventions for the treatment of persisting pain in children. The guidelines are in the final stages of review and approval. They include clinical guidance as well as guidance for the organization of the health system and policy framework for providing pain relief. The guidelines will be published in early 2011.

Access to opioids in Eastern Europe
In December 2009, the Project "Access to Opioid Medicines in Europe" (ATOME) started. The project is funded by the European Commission 7th Framework Programme with the aim of improving access to opioid medication in Europe. Ten ATOME partners from seven countries, including WHO, will work with the country teams of twelve ATOME target countries in Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey.

Global challenges with opioid accessibility

Estimates of opioids in developing countries
The International Narcotics Control Board and the ACMP are currently working on a Joint WHO/INCB Manual for calculating estimates for drugs under international control in developing countries. Some progress has been made, but activities are suspended currently because of a lack of resources.
WHO policy guidelines on controlled substances

The ACMP is developing an update of the WHO Policy guidelines Achieving Balance in National Opioids Control Policy (published in 2000). This update is one of the work packages of the ATOME project. A Guidelines Development Group will convene from 22 to 24 November 2010 to finalize the policy guidelines. The updated document covers all controlled medicines: opioid analgesics, opioid agonist therapy for drug dependence as well as medicines used for neurology, psychiatry and emergency obstetrics. The guidelines will be published in early 2011.

See also our controlled medicines website

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