



## TBSP Calls On Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies To “Open Your House”

Paul Thorn of the TB Survival Project (TBSP) attended the 7<sup>th</sup> European Red Cross Red Crescent National Society Conference in Istanbul. Between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 two main topics were being discussed, Health and Care and Migration. Paul was invited to speak about affected communities and their role in the fight against TB/MDR-TB as one of the keynote speakers at the Plenary Session.

In his address he called for closer collaboration with Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as major partners active at the community level in TB care and prevention. Their community-based programs are proven to be effective in global TB control because they give marginalized and vulnerable groups access to health care, and ensure higher treatment completion through a “personalized” approach to patients, that include food and psychosocial support. But Paul called for more – he called for partnership and inclusion.

He said; “I am here today to encourage the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to work more closely with us. Open your house to us, help us to meet each other, nurture us so that we have a united voice in the community. Help us by working with us, not only for us,” he concluded. More than 300 delegates from over 50 countries attended the conference.

## CFCS Update

At the end of May applications to the STOP TB Partnership’s Challenge Facility for Civil Society (CFCS) closed. TBSP has an interest in the All-Ukrainian Network application for a concept called “Café TB”.

It is an initiative that would provide a meeting place once a week in 11 towns and cities across Ukraine in local cafes. If successful the CFCS funding would enable people with HIV/TB and TB/MDR-TB to drop in have a drink and meet others in a similar situation. It is hoped that “Café TB” will provide the kind of environment that shall encourage affected communities to organize other TB/MDR-TB activities in their own regions and to find a united voice. It will also provide much needed peer-to-peer support. “Café TB” would also provide themed mornings on such topics as adherence and dealing with the side affects of TB medication.

We shall keep you updated on the progress of the application. Fingers crossed!

## Board Games Don't Cure Tuberculosis!

Isn't EBAY a wonderful thing? I decided (in desperation of fulfilling my need to buy something, anything), to type in "Tuberculosis", as a search, and to my surprise there was actually quite a bit you could buy! There were mainly postage stamps, special editions produced by a variety of countries with a TB theme. You could also buy 80 year old medical apparatus used for collapsing the lung (pneumo-thorax treatment), which looked particularly scary and certainly didn't appeal as a purchase.

What I did find was a book with a similar title to one I have written. "The Tuberculosis Handbook" (and I thought I had been so original!), so I bought it for pennies. It was published in 1914 and written by A. H. G. Burton M.D. I took it on a recent holiday and read it on the beach in an afternoon. I went through the book with a mixture of sadness and amusement. Sad because there was obviously nothing by way of medicine to treat the condition, the main medical interventions being 1) open air life, 2) rest, 3) graduated labour and 4) diet and hygiene. Amused because of some of the interventions that were thought as being helpful.

This is one passage I would like to share with you;

"When the patient's temperature has been normal for a week he is allowed out of bed for a short time each day, generally in the middle of the day, lying on a lounge chair. Gradually the time will be increased until he is up all day. He is then able to take a gentle walk, starting with a quarter of a mile each day, and only being allowed to gently stroll. He should be made to walk with his head up and mouth closed, his chest being well expanded.

If no untoward results follow, the distance may be gradually increased until he is walking from 6 to 10 miles each day." Frankly I can't remember the last time I walked anymore than a mile!!

"It will be noticed how large a part rest plays in the patient's life. Hill climbing, if possible may carefully be introduced into the walking exercise. The patient when he is well on in convalescence is allowed games such as drafts, chess dominoes, etc. at the beginning, going onto bowls, croquet, and golf; and when he is able to walk 4 miles a day, he will be begun with such duties as making beds, cleaning brasses etc., in the wards."

Thankfully playing draughts and croquet is no longer considered necessary in the treatment of TB, unless you really want to. As for making beds and cleaning the ward – give me the tablets any day!

## **Want to tell others of your TB/MDR-TB experience?**

If you have, or have had TB/MDR-TB, TBSP wants to hear from you. Would you like to share your story with others? You would be surprised how helpful, and the strength other people with TB/MDR-TB find reading from other people's experience of the disease. Simply log onto our website at [www.tbsurvivalproject.org](http://www.tbsurvivalproject.org) and click on "Leave Story". Your story should not be longer than 700 words long and you should clearly state that you are aware your piece is for publication online and state whether you wish to remain anonymous or not. We look forward to hearing from you!

## **STBP – Europe; two seats on Executive Committee**

Good news. The Stop TB Partnership – Europe has agreed to create an extra seat on the Executive Committee. It has been an uphill struggle trying to engage the affected community to get involved in the initiative. If you're interested in standing for one of the seats once an election process has been agreed, TBSP would be pleased to hear from you. Any potential representatives from Eastern Europe would be particularly welcome.

## **Parlez-vous Français?**

TBSP is working with French speakers to create a French version of the Project website. Hopefully the finished effort will be online by the end of July 2007.

## **Do you have something to say?**

This is the first of (hopefully) many monthly newsletters brought to you by TBSP. We hope to make it bigger in the future (and get a bit more professional in terms of design – apologies; techie stuff is not my forte!). If you have a story or something to share with others, then drop us a line via the project website.

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