

Highlights from the Children's HIV Association Conference

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Introduction

The Children's HIV Association (CHIVA) is a registered charity working across the UK and Ireland to improve care for HIV-positive children and their families. CHIVA has the distinct function of not only being a professionals' organisation but also in supporting charity work run through CHIVA projects. CHIVA provides information, guidance and support for professionals, parents and young people living with HIV and runs an annual support camp for HIV-positive young people.

The 9th Annual Conference of the Children's HIV Association was held on the 22 May 2015 at the University of Leicester. The conference attracted a wide variety of audience members including doctors, nurses, medical students, voluntary sector and community registrations. The conference has always had a close involvement with the CHIVA Youth Committee who play an important role in contributing to the content of the programme. One of the highlights of the conference is the CHIVA Youth Committee session, which provides an update on the summer camp and the work of the CHIVA Projects Team.

Conference programme

This year's conference included two sessions focusing on sexual health training. In addition, there were lectures looking at treatment guidelines, talking to young people about HIV and psychological standards.

The conference began with an excellent talk on adolescent sexual health and the role and importance of social media by **Dr Sophie Khadr** (UCL Institute of Child Health, London). The talk highlighted not only the potential dangers of social media for adolescent sexual health, but also how social media can be used to engage and educate young people on various aspects of sexual health.

Dr Aseel Hegazi (St George's Hospital, London) guided the audience on how best to take a sexual history from a young person. There were some excellent tips on how to get the best out of the clinic consultation with a young person and how to avoid potential pitfalls.

The most powerful talk of the morning session was delivered by **Miss Hoda Ali** (Ealing Hospital, London). The talk was passionate, emotional and described how female genital mutilation (FGM) leaves lasting damage on those who have had to undergo this barbaric practice. The talk was excellent, well received and generated a thought-provoking discussion and debate. It highlighted how some organisations are working hard to raise awareness of FGM among health professionals and the general public.

The subsequent two lectures were on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by **Dr Selena Singh** (St Thomas' Hospital, London) and safeguarding, sexual exploitation and sexual assault by **Dr Annette Langseth** (the Haven, London). Dr Singh gave an overview of the common STIs seen in young people and how to manage them. Dr Langseth gave an overview of how best to manage young people and children suspected of sexual assault. The talk gave some excellent practical points on how to manage those scenarios which will be useful for all health professionals, especially those working in busy emergency departments.

The final talk of the morning session was delivered by the CHIVA Projects Team, **Ms Magda Conway** and **Ms Amanda Ely**. The duo were joined by the fantastic CHIVA Youth Committee members who captivated the audience on how not to talk to young people about sex. The talk was mainly aimed at paediatricians who see young people in their clinic. It is well known that paediatricians do not feel comfortable talking about sex and taking sexual history from young persons. The subsequent discussion was interesting: some young people felt comfortable speaking to a female nurse about their sexual history whereas some felt uncomfortable talking to their doctors and nurses. The discussion provided valuable tips for child health professionals on taking a sexual history from young people in clinics.

The second half of the programme began with oral research presentations and the topics included: neurocognitive function in perinatally HIV-infected young people and HIV-negative siblings; teachers' awareness of HIV and the needs of children affected by HIV in England; malignancy in HIV-positive young people; and maternal autonomy vs infant advocacy: when parents decline HIV testing. **Dr Alasdair Bamford** (St Thomas' Hospital, London) updated the audience on the treatment guidelines for paediatric HIV. The subsequent session included talks on disclosure of HIV and an update on CHIVA projects and the CHIVA Youth Committee.

The final session of the programme included an update on CHIPS (Collaborative HIV Paediatric Study) and AALPHI (Adolescents and Adults Living with Perinatal HIV). AALPHI is a prospective cohort of two groups of young people: perinatally HIV-infected individuals, who have been followed in childhood through CHIPS (called 'cases'); and HIV negative individuals (called 'controls'), who have a parent with HIV or who are living in the same household as a case (an HIV-infected young person in the study) or have a sibling, friend or partner who is a case.

The conference concluded with a lecture on psychology services in paediatric HIV.

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