

INTRODUCTION TO THE RUSSIAN EDITION

According to a recent estimate by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the number of people living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia has increased sharply in recent years. As of the end of 2006, it was approximately 1.7 million people [1.2 – 2.6 million]. That level represents a more than 20-fold increase in less than ten years. An estimated 270 000 people [170 000–820 000] were newly infected with HIV in 2006, while 84,000 [58,000–120,000] died of AIDS [*AIDS Epidemic Update: special report on HIV/AIDS: December 2006, WHO/UNAIDS*].

The Russian Federation and Ukraine account for 90% of all people living with HIV in this region. Although much smaller in scale, some of the epidemics elsewhere in the region are also growing. Since 2001, the rates of newly reported HIV infections have more than doubled in Georgia (from 20 per million to 54 in 2005) and the Republic of Moldova (from 55 to 127), and almost quadrupled in Uzbekistan (from 22 to 83). Much smaller epidemics are under way in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan [*AIDS Epidemic Update: special report on HIV/AIDS: December 2006, WHO/UNAIDS*]. The virus is continuing to spread in these and other countries of the region. This situation indicates the need for decisive and comprehensive measures.

Today the countries of this region, and the entire world community, face the problem of providing treatment, care, and support for the region's 1.7 million people living with HIV/AIDS. According to the 2006 WHO/UNAIDS Report, access to antiretroviral therapy continues to be slow to expand. As of mid-2006, fewer than 24 000 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment —13% of the estimated 190 000 people who need the drugs. Individuals who use non-sterile injecting drug equipment remain especially poorly served by efforts to roll-out antiretroviral therapy. Although they represent more than two thirds of HIV cases in the region, they comprise only about one quarter of people receiving antiretroviral therapy.

Recent country-level efforts against the epidemic, including expanded access to care, have enjoyed increasing international support, including assistance from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the World Bank, and other donor organizations. The progress of the epidemic and stepping up of efforts against it create a growing demand for technical assistance to increase the efficacy and manage the resources of existing programs, monitor, and evaluate them.

Under these circumstances, it is extremely important for healthcare professionals to have the latest information on methods of treatment and other HIV care. John Bartlett's *Pocket Guide to Adult HIV/AIDS Treatment* (2007) contains up-to-date information on issues like the baseline evaluation, drug information, antiretroviral therapy, pregnancy and HIV, prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in HIV-infected persons, and occupational post-exposure prophylaxis. Among the new features of this year's edition is a list of Web resources. The information on drugs, including WHO recommendations for antiretroviral therapy in countries with limited resources, has been partially updated. All of the information in the *Guide* is based on research that meets the standards of evidence-based medicine. Thus, it is a reliable source of a wide range of information for healthcare professionals, as well as everybody involved in providing treatment and other care to people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Bartlett's Guide is premised on current capabilities for caring for HIV-infected patients in the USA. The healthcare systems of the USA and the CIS countries differ substantially, as do their respective clinical care possibilities for HIV/AIDS patients. Differences in economic systems, the role of government and non-governmental organizations, and social support agencies require that the material in the Guide be adapted for CIS conditions. Also, the approach to examinations and treatment for HIV-infected persons and AIDS patients in most CIS countries is regulated by the *2006-2007 WHO HIV/AIDS Protocols on Treatment and Care for the European Region*, as well as standards adopted in each country. For this reason, the material presented in this book may be used as an excellent source of information, but it should not be taken whole cloth as a manual for practice.

This guide is recommended for a wide audience, including providers of medical care for people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as teachers at medical schools and in continuing education programs.