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Editorial

Tuberculosis research meeting in Bahia

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For the past three years Bahia has the opportunity to sponsor the Tuberculosis Research Meeting in Bahia. These meetings are responses to the need of increasing the quantity and quality of research in tuberculosis. In this last meeting Dr. Christian Lienhardt from the WHO tuberculosis program presented impressive and convincing figures of the impossibility of eliminating tuberculosis without a tripod: new vaccine strategy (preventing new infections), new drug therapy (to treat diseased and infected) and diagnostic tools (to target those who need quickly and efficiently). They are coming; this is my optimistic view for the human intelligence. An example of these efforts was the release of the first drug against resistant tuberculosis approved (Bedaquiline) in December 2012 by the FDA after more than 50 years waiting. There are several more in the second and third clinical trial phases of the research pipeline. Good news!

Tuberculosis numbers are falling. “The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target to halt and reverse the TB epidemic by 2015 has already been achieved. New cases of TB have been falling for several years and fell at a rate of 2.2% between 2010 and 2011” says the 2012’s Global Report of Tuberculosis from the World Health Organization, most impressing is also the number of collaborators of the Report, it takes four pages, this is truly collaboration! This is truly a coordinated effort to eliminate this plague. Numbers are falling but we are still not quite there. This is the meaning of the tuberculosis research

meeting in Bahia (EPTBa), to gather together Brazilian researchers who are interested in this effort.

The first EPTBa was coordinated by Dr. Sérgio Arruda from Centro de Pesquisas Gonçalo Moniz of the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, in 2011, Dr. Songeli Freire from the Instituto de Ciências da Saúde from Universidade Federal da Bahia coordinated the second and I had the opportunity to coordinate this third one. The idea to publish these five reviews was to present a bit of history and the present status of tuberculosis research from Brazilians, in a Brazilian journal.

Dr. Oliveira together with others from the National tuberculosis control programme reviewing the last ten years of the tuberculosis epidemiology in Brazil raises the obstacles, together with the improvements, in controlling tuberculosis in Brazil. On their turn, Dr. Kritski and colleagues assessing diagnostic tools on tuberculosis remarks that “research and practice clinical processes are intertwined and the main outcomes to be considered are the patient’s health and actions creating a more effective health system in which the new technology will be incorporated”. The third paper reviews the present status of the art of resistance, were Drs. Lemos and Matos from the Universidade Federal da Bahia and State Program of Tuberculosis Resistance report the problem that the multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) constitutes an important public health issue with the still low cure rate, calling to our attention the presence of new drugs and the

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recent approved Bedaquiline. Drs. Coelho-Filho, Takenami and Arruda reviewing the Rick formula on tuberculosis granuloma state “that the balance between the characteristics of the bacillus and host protective response is necessary to indicate the outcome of pathogenesis, infection or active disease and the necrosis degree of the tuberculosis lesion” opening space for more research on this area. And closing Dr. Leite reviews the contributions of one of the oldest Brazilian

specialized intuitions in research and patient care in Bahia, maybe in Brazil, remarking the fundamental figure of Dr. José Silveira in bringing to Brazil drugs at that time being tested, the mass vaccination defense when people were afraid of using it and other improvements that put Brazil in the frontier of the tuberculosis research. Good reading and welcome to the next meeting in July 2013.