



9th ISW-TBE Newsletter

March 2009

Dear colleague,

we are very proud to present to you the 9th edition of our international TBE newsletter which you will hopefully enjoy while reading. The newsletter will cover an update on the latest activities of the International Scientific Working Group on TBE (ISW-TBE).

In this edition you will find a summary on:

1.) 11th ISW-TBE Conference 2009

2.) ISW-TBE Press Workshop

3.) ISW-TBE Celebration Brochure

4.) ISW-TBE Hiking Campaign – New Tools

5.) Conference Announcements 2009

a.) X International Jena Symposium on Tick- Borne Diseases, Weimar, Germany, 19 – 21 March 2009

b.) 11th Conference of the International Society of Travel Medicine (CISTM11) Budapest, Hungary, May 24-28,2009

c.) International Forum for Surveillance and Control of Mosquitoes and Mosquito-Borne Diseases, Beijing, China, May 25-29, 2009

d.) European Society of Pediatric Infectious Disease (ESPID), Brussels, Belgium, June 9-13, 2009

e.) 5th European Meeting on Viral Zoonoses (EVZ), St. Raphaël, France, September 26-29, 2009

Please feel free and come back to us in case of comments, further suggestions and ideas for this newsletter that we will certainly try to incorporate in one of our next editions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Ursula Kunze". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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1.) 11th ISW-TBE Conference 2009

January 29-30, the 11th Annual Meeting of the ISW-TBE was taking place in Vienna at Hotel Schloss Wilhelminenberg. The main focus of the meeting was whether the danger of contracting TBE increases with age and on whether today's increased mobility raises the risk of TBE. 26 speakers and about 80 international key opinion leaders were joining the event. The conference was preceded by an international Asian pre-meeting, followed by an international press workshop for invited journalists and an exclusive number of key opinion leaders only. Tourism, migration, and commuting have become omnipresent phenomena. Never before have people been as mobile as they are today. Unfortunately, this increased mobility does not always go hand in hand with increased awareness of the risk of TBE and the means of protecting against it, hence 2009 the meeting was entitled:

From Childhood to Golden Age: Increased Mobility – Increased Risk of Contracting TBE?



Group picture, ISW-TBE 2009

The agenda comprised the following topics:

- ISW-TBE 2008: What has been achieved in 2008, what's the outlook for 2009?
- TBE cases and vaccination status in 2008
- New projects
- New data in children
- New clinical trials and publications
- TBE and the traveler

Asian pre-meeting

On January 28, prior to the official ISW-TBE conference, an Asian pre-meeting took place. Its purpose was to discuss the current TBE situation in some Asian regions and potential approaches to combat the progression of the disease especially in these areas.

One case in point is Romania, which used to be uncharted territory when it came to TBE. "Today it is known that the geoclimatic and ecological conditions in Romania allow the TBE virus to circulate in natural foci. In humans, seroprevalence has been estimated at up to 52%, with the highest seroprevalence found in foresters.", says the ISW-TBE chair, Prof. Michael Kunze.



Short summary of the ISW-TBE meeting:

The keynote address was delivered by Austria's Director General of Public Health, Professor Dr. Hubert Hrabcik. He called on pharmaceutical manufacturers and health care professionals to continue to look past the commercial success and see vaccine development for what it is – a life-saving contribution to public health at a global level.

Facts & figures: Epidemiology in Europe

Nordic-Baltic region: Dr. Göran Günther showed that a decrease in the number of TBE cases was seen in Estonia and Lithuania, whereas numbers remained fairly constant in Norway, Finland, and Latvia and increased in Sweden.

Central and Eastern Europe: Epidemiology was presented by Professor Roman Prymula and Professor Robert Flisiak, Poland. They showed that the developments in these countries again confirmed the general decreasing trend seen throughout much of Europe since 2006.

Austria, Germany, and Switzerland: Case numbers of TBE came from Professor Jochen Süss, who once more showed that the decrease in morbidity in Austria has gone hand in hand with an increase in vaccination coverage from approx. 6% in 1980 to 88% since 2006.

Is there a TBE virus in Asia?

Japan & China: According to Professor Ikuo Takashima, there has been only one recorded case of TBE in Japan, so far, occurring in Kamiiso Town located in the southern part of Hokkaido. Professor Guodong Liang highlighted that two TBE viruses are present in mainland China, the Spring-Summer Encephalitis Virus (SSEV) and the Kyasanur forest disease virus (KFDV).

Convincing travelers at risk of the need for TBE immunization

Professor Jay Keystone set out to answer this question by conducting a survey of health risks when traveling to Europe. The scenario of the survey consisted of a Canadian-born family who was planning to travel to Europe for one month during July 2009, intending to spend their time cycling, hiking, and camping in rural areas of these countries.

How to effectively increase vaccination rates among school children

Insights into how to drive a successful TBE vaccination campaign in schools were presented by Dr. Erich Robetin. In response to the highest recorded morbidity of TBE in Europe, the year 1981 saw

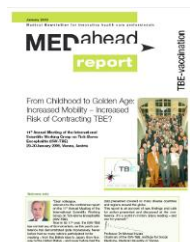
the introduction of an organized TBE mass vaccination campaign.

Ensuring adequate antibody titers in the elderly

A retrospective analysis of data obtained in clinical practice presented by Dr. Eva Jílková determined the proportion of elderly persons with insufficient antibody response after the administration of 2 doses of TBE vaccine. In this study, 17% of vaccinated persons were without protective antibodies after 2 doses of TBE vaccine, confirming the need to test the antibody response after the second vaccination and to administer an additional dose in the event that antibody response is found to be insufficient.

ISW-TBE Conference Report

A detailed report from this latest ISW-TBE meeting is now available and can be ordered via info@publichealth.at.





2.) ISW-TBE Press Workshop

Prior to the meeting a press workshop organized by the ISW-TBE stressed the need for raising public awareness on TBE and for informing journalists appropriately about the effectiveness of vaccination against this dangerous disease. Chairman Prof. Michael Kunze – Institute of Social Medicine, University of Vienna/Austria – discussed together with other TBE experts and journalists from various European countries how the ISW-TBE can offer the optimal support to raise TBE awareness amongst the general public.



Press workshop impressions

Statements:



Dr. Pier Luigi Lopalco, European Society of Pediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID), Stockholm
"The importance of TBE from the perspective of ESPID":

By working with experts throughout Europe, ESPID pools Europe-wide surveillance data and develops scientific opinions about the risks posed by current and emerging infectious diseases. Even though TBE is not included into the list of diseases to be reported at EU level, nevertheless the ESPID considers this topic of high relevance and is going to start a series of activities targeted at improving the knowledge on TBE burden of disease in the EU and at facilitating good practices in TBE vaccination strategies.



Prof. Jochen Süss, National Reference Laboratory for Tick-borne Diseases, Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute Jena, Germany:

"Epidemiology of TBE"

Today, TBE is a notifiable disease in 16 European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland). It is not notifiable in Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Denmark (without Bornholm), and the Netherlands. Between 1990 and 2007, 157,584 cases of TBE were documented in 19 TBE countries with reliable data – an average of 8,755 cases per year. In Europe excluding Russia, 50,486 cases were reported – an average of 2,805 cases annually.



Prof. Franz X. Heinz, Institute of Virology, Medical University of Vienna
“Changing epidemiology of TBE and transmission by goat milk in Austria”:

In 2008, Austria experienced a remarkable example of a familial cluster of TBE cases transmitted by goat's milk cheese made at an alpine meadow in the federal state of Vorarlberg. Out of seven people who had consumed the same cheese, six were infected and four of them came down with clinically overt TBE. None of them was TBE vaccinated. The carefully conducted investigations confirmed that one of the goats was indeed infected with TBE virus and that this infection had occurred at an altitude of about 1,500 m. Together with observations made in the Czech Republic this incidence suggests an expansion of TBE endemic areas to higher altitudes.



DDr. Martin Haditsch, TravelMedCenter Leonding and Elisabethinen Hospital Linz
“Event Tourism and TBE”:

Also short term travelers going to TBE endemic areas should be vaccinated against TBE if they plan outdoor activities. This is especially true for “VIPs” such as outstanding sportspeople, politicians, business people and managers. If someone has no access to the vaccine at home and is traveling to or through countries where the vaccine is available, the series could be started as soon as this strategy of prevention is accepted and can be completed during following stays. Travel medicine practitioners should do their best to raise awareness about TBE among travelers. In addition to the promotion of the vaccine, this should include measures of personal protection (repellents), early detection (tick check) and removal of the ticks. This is of utmost importance in travelers with no access to a vaccine of high quality or not willing to get vaccinated.



Dr. Ulf Baumhackl, Director em. Neurology Department, LK St.Pölten
“Tick-Borne Encephalitis: The Face of the Disease”:

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) often runs a biphasic course. The first phase with fever and rather uncharacteristic “flu-like” symptoms is followed by the second phase with meningitis (often benign) or meningo-encephalitis (can be severe), sometimes also myelitis (can be catastrophic, with respiratory failure and intermittently mechanically ventilation, development of a flaccid paralysis of the upper and lower extremities). The risk for permanent sequelae is increasing with age. Treatment of TBE is symptom-related, there is no causal-orientated therapy available. Vaccination is the only efficient protection.



Mrs. Christine Freund, TBE-Victim Self Help Group, Vienna
“Advise and Help for Tick Victims”:

The Self-Help Group for Tick Victims was founded in 1986, at a time when the Austrian population had not yet been sufficiently inoculated against TBE, and as a result there wound up being yet more infections (300 cases of illness). TBE is a disease that is 99 % avoidable! For this reason it is important that those affected pass along their experiences to the general public, so as to make the dangerousness of this disease clearly visible. Many of our most severely impaired members would gladly be able to turn back the wheel of time and have themselves inoculated retroactively. That is why the message from those affected to the uninoculated is to protect yourselves against TBE!



Highlights of the Workshop

One special feature was the live vaccination of some volunteers, which was conducted by DDr. Martin Haditsch.

Furthermore, especially on the occasion of the press workshop a special piece of art was designed, a tick sculpture of frightening size. Its purpose was to highlight the danger of the nearly invisible insects lurking in the nature and thus emphasizing the severity of contraction of tick-borne encephalitis and its consequences. The picture beneath shows the besaid “beast” surrounded by the presenters of the workshop.



Live vaccination of Prof. Jochen Süß



Presenters of the press workshop

ISW-TBE Press Workshop Report

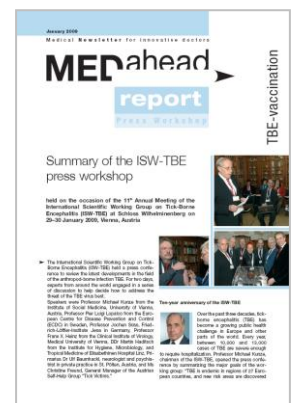
Based on the discussions between the speakers and the journalists a press workshop report has been issued. It provides a summary of the statements of the individual speakers followed by an extensive conclusion. A cutaway thereof:

“For the ISW-TBE, maintaining close contacts to the press and media is and will continue to be among its top priorities. [...] Keeping the general public informed about the continuing risk of TBE through the media is a must to help people make an informed decision. [...] Another conclusion drawn from the exchange with journalists is that information on TBE should also be provided to tourists traveling to Austria, ideally through the Austrian tourist board or travel agencies.”

The ISW-TBE press workshop report can be ordered via info@publichealth.at.

3.) ISW-TBE Celebration Brochure

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the ISW-TBE meeting a celebration brochure was issued, summing up the activities and the achievements of the expert group over the past decade. A special edition was delivered to the ISW-TBE Chair, Prof. Michael Kunze, Institute for Social Medicine, Vienna.





The content of the brochure covers the following topics:



- What is Tick-Borne Encephalitis?
- What is the ISW-TBE?
- Overview of ISW-TBE Activities
- Internet Platforms
- ISW-TBE Meetings
- ISW-TBE Media Activities
- ISW-TBE Information Material
- Publications
- How to contribute

Celebration Brochure

4.) ISW-TBE Hiking Campaign – New Tools

Environmental changes have encouraged the TBE virus to climb to hither to unknown heights. The year 2008 marked the first time the TBE virus has been found to travel to heights of about ~1,500 meters above sea level. As a result, hikers and trekkers may be faced with a new danger. The 2009 hiking campaign has been designed to specifically address this target group.



Waiting room poster, TBE Hikers' guide, TBE-Infolyer, Hikers' mailing

If you would like to order some of the material, please, follow the subsequent link: www.isw-tbe.info

5.) Conference Announcements:

a.) X International Jena Symposium on Tick- Borne Diseases, Weimar, Germany, 19 – 21 March 2009



The 10th International Jena Symposium is dedicated to the key subject "Prevention". The aim is to address the avoidance of tick bites, discuss how to reduce tick activity in their native habitat as well as the successful combat of ticks through biological control measures and to prevent TBE by vaccination. Furthermore the most outstanding presentation during the Symposium will be rewarded with the Herbert Sinnecker-Christian Kunz Award.

If you would like to participate, please find the registration form and further details under the following link: www.tbd-symposium.com



b.) 11th Conference of the International Society of Travel Medicine (CISTM11), Budapest, Hungary, May 24-28, 2009



This conference is dealing with state of the art clinical practice, research, and education, the field of travel and migration medicine. The target audience includes physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and students involved in primary care, occupational, migrant and public health, infectious disease, emergency and wilderness medicine. Also, it is designed to meet the needs of the travel media and industry as well as manufacturers of travel health-related products, drugs and vaccines.

For more information please use the following link: <http://www.istm.org/>

c.) International Forum for Surveillance and Control of Mosquitoes and Mosquito-Borne Diseases, Beijing, China, May 25-29, 2009



In May 25-29 an international meeting on control of mosquito and mosquito-borne diseases is going to be held in Beijing, China. The meeting will be organized by the Medical Entomology Association of Chinese Microbiology Society. One of the sessions will be specifically dedicated to arboviruses.

For more information please use the link below: http://www.taiming.com.cn/MosquitoForum/index_en.htm

d.) European Society of Pediatric Infectious Disease (ESPID), Brussels, Belgium, June 9-13, 2009



The 27th annual ESPID conference in 2009 is going to include a high quality scientific programme focusing on "Serious Bacterial Infections". Top international experts will present new insights and initiate clinical discussions on bacteriology, epidemiology, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of major paediatric infectious diseases.

If you would like to receive more information please use the following link: <http://www2.kenes.com/espид/pages/home.aspx>

e) 5th European Meeting on Viral Zoonoses (EVZ), St. Raphaël, France, September 26-29, 2009



As a continuation to the successful European meetings on viral zoonoses in St. Raphaël in 2001, 2003, 2005, and in St. Andrews in 2007, the fifth meeting similarly covers research on ecology, epidemiology, virology and prevention of zoonotic viral diseases.

If you would like to receive more information please use the following link: <http://www.euroviralzoon.com/index.html>

This email is intended merely to highlight issues and not to be comprehensive, nor to provide medical advice. Should you have any questions on issues reported here, please contact Prof. Ursula Kunze (ursula.kunze@meduniwien.ac.at). We hold your email address, which we use to send you this electronic news update on TBE and on the activities of the ISW -TBE group. We use your details for our own internal purposes only. If any of your details are incorrect or if you no longer wish to receive emails from us, please let us know by emailing us at ursula.kunze@meduniwien.ac.at.