



Training workshop on laboratory diphtheria diagnostics
Nicosia, Cyprus
11-13 October 2017

Scope and purpose

Background

Significant gaps in the capacity to diagnose diphtheria exist in a number of Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region. This finding was based on a preliminary analysis of a recent survey on global analysis on securing diphtheria diagnostic capacity. The largest gaps relate to laboratory training and to surveillance for all three potentially toxigenic diphtheria pathogens namely *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, *C. ulcerans* and *C. pseudotuberculosis*.

Aim of the workshop

The main aim of the meeting is to strengthen the participants' skills and to build capacity in the laboratory diagnosis of diphtheria. The expected outcome of this workshop is to establish a formal coordinated approach to strengthen diphtheria surveillance.

The main objectives of this meeting are:

1. To update microbiological focal persons on the laboratory capabilities and needs (including quality assurance) of laboratories conducting diphtheria diagnostics.
2. To establish specialized methods for laboratory diagnosis of diphtheria and teach participants the isolation and identification of the causative organisms directly from clinical specimens.
3. To identify the immediate and long-term needs (over the following 12 months) in terms of reagents and diagnostic materials required for laboratory diagnosis of diphtheria.
4. To undertake detailed discussions on aspects of microbiological diagnostics for diphtheria.

5. To provide participants with theoretical and practical information on epidemiological typing methods for *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* and other potentially toxigenic corynebacteria.
6. To discuss the current status of diphtheria and immediate and long-term needs among countries represented at the workshop.
7. Review availability and quality of diphtheria antitoxin (DAT), and antibiotics and their distribution (cold-chain etc).

This meeting is a collaborative effort of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Diphtheria and the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Structure of the meeting

The morning of first day will be structured as plenary sessions to inform about and discuss the current epidemiological status of diphtheria and the challenges that countries with low or undetected incidence have in performing laboratory diagnosis of diphtheria.

Laboratory training with hands-on learning will start in the afternoon of the first day and through the afternoon of the third day.