



## **Clinicians visit from Africa and Asia to learn about UK HIV practices**

**Maidenhead UK, August 2008.** Clinicians from Africa and Asia have visited leading London teaching hospitals to advance their skills and knowledge in the management of HIV. The clinicians visited as part of the annual Abbott Travel Scholarship programme, co-ordinated in collaboration with the British HIV Association (BHIVA) and St Stephen's AIDS Trust (SSAT). This programme provides practicing HIV clinicians from resource-poor-countries around the world with access to cutting-edge research and treatment information to help improve clinical treatment in their home countries.

The programme is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year and offered participants from Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and Myanmar with an opportunity to spend three weeks at the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital's HIV/GUM Directorate to observe HIV clinical practice and visit Great Ormond Street and King's College Hospitals. As part of their trip, the scholars also attended the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual BHIVA Conference in Belfast, one of the top forums for the UK's leading HIV clinicians. The clinicians also met representatives from Abbott's offices in the UK to learn more about the company's HIV/AIDS activities.

Dr John Obbo, a BHIVA scholar and Consultant Physician, Mbale Regional Referral Hospital in Uganda commented: "The scholarship has provided an invaluable learning opportunity and I have benefited from the experience and skills of my counterparts in the UK. The next step is to share the knowledge I have gained with my colleagues at home for the benefit of our HIV/AIDS patients at the Mbale Regional Referral Hospital in Uganda."

Dr Ian Williams, Chair of BHIVA, highlighted the importance of this scholarship, commenting, "We are grateful to Abbott for providing these delegates the opportunity to attend the BHIVA conference while they complete their learning programme in the UK."

- more -

Professor Brian Gazzard, Chair of St Stephen's AIDS Trust, added "It is important to support scholarship initiatives which enable the UK to share the knowledge we have gained with resource poor countries."

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors**

**About Abbott and HIV**

For more than 20 years, Abbott has made a significant contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS through the development of innovative tests and medicines. Building on this history, Abbott and the Abbott Fund have invested more than \$100 million to advance HIV testing, treatment and support services in developing countries through Abbott Global AIDS Care programmes.

Working together with local and international partners, Abbott is improving the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS through programmes targeting critical areas of need in developing countries:

- Helping prevent mother-to-child transmission
- Supporting children affected by HIV/AIDS
- Strengthening health care systems
- Expanding access to testing and treatment.

**About Abbott's Commitment to Fighting HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS is a global problem that demands shared commitment and shared responsibility. Abbott is committed to working with governments, multilateral organisations, nongovernmental organisations and patient groups to expand access to HIV treatments around the world. Abbott has also made significant investments in expanding manufacturing capacity to meet the growing demand for HIV treatment in developing countries.

Abbott and the company's philanthropic foundation, Abbott Fund, have invested more than US\$100 million in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa and the developing world. Abbott Fund-supported programmes have served more than 700,000 children and families.

- more -

In addition, more than 250,000 patients have been tested through Abbott Fund-supported voluntary counseling and testing programmes, with thousands being referred to treatment programmes. Abbott also has donated more than 8 million rapid HIV tests to help prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission.

Abbott and Abbott Fund have announced several efforts to expand access to treatment and care for children living with HIV/AIDS, including an additional investment of US\$12 million in grants and product donations this year.

**About Abbott**

Abbott is a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals and medical products, including nutritionals, devices and diagnostics. The company employs more than 68,000 people and markets its products in more than 130 countries.

**About BHIVA**

The British HIV Association (BHIVA) is committed to providing excellence in the care of people with HIV/AIDS. It acts as a national advisory body to professions and other organisations on all aspects of HIV-care. Its nearly-900 members are mainly doctors and other health professionals directly involved in such care of people with HIV/AIDS. Its activities include educational conferences, producing clinical guidelines, and monitoring standards of care.

**About St Stephen's AIDS Trust**

St Stephen's AIDS Trust was founded in 1991 to support clinical research in HIV/AIDS to improve the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS and to share knowledge and experience through education and training. Based in the Chelsea and Westminster's HIV/GUM Unit, the Charity's primary aim is to improve treatment for HIV-infected patients through research into new drugs and delivering and ensuring best practice.

###