

Partnerships Participate in WHONET

As NIS partnerships establish national infection control programs based on internationally recognized standards, upgrading the level of microbiology services has become a priority. AIHA's new WHONET project assists the Russian and Ukrainian ministries of health and several partnership hospitals in implementing ways to monitor resistance and facilitate the appropriate use of antibiotics in hospitals.

As the first step in this project, AIHA coordinated a workshop in July to introduce microbiologists to the WHONET program. The workshop was taught by John Stelling and Thomas O'Brien, who developed WHONET. Participants included microbiologists from three central ministerial laboratories--National Institute of Epidemiology in Moscow, Regional Reference Laboratory in St. Petersburg and the National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases in Kiev--and three partnership hospitals--City Hospital #2 in Vladivostok, Russia, Sokolov Hospital in St. Petersburg and Odessa Oblast Hospital in Ukraine.

Based on data analysis of WHONET, observations and recommendations of previous hospital infection control surveys, each partnership will work to implement ways to control the use of broad-spectrum antibiotics, including restrictions on prescriptions, use of special order forms for drugs and review of formularies--the approved lists of drugs for doctors to prescribe--to eliminate duplication of antibiotics. Preliminary data generated from WHONET and problems in implementing the program will be reviewed in a workshop held just prior to the October NIS partnership conference in Atlanta.

For many at the workshop, WHONET offers new access to standardized record keeping and sharing of data. "WHONET allows us to computerize. In the past, we compiled the data on paper, so this is a big step forward," said Anatoliy Shapiro, chief of scientific research for the Microbiology Laboratory for Infectious Diseases in Kiev.