

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001231

OUTCOME: 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Highly Infectious Diseases

Type of Question: Hansard Page 106, 22 October 2014

Senator: McLucas, Jan

Question:

I want to go to a best practice question, Professor, around the management of tuberculosis. There has been a debate about whether or not we should centralise contact tracing and the patient management process and whether it needs to be devolved into health regions. Can you advise the committee of your view about the best practice around a very infectious disease like tuberculosis?

Is there no literature around best practice of highly infectious diseases that you could point the committee to?

Answer:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published a series of guidelines on tuberculosis including guidelines on infection control, contact tracing and patient management:
<http://www.who.int/publications/guidelines/tuberculosis/en/>

The Australian Government, in consultation with Communicable Diseases Network Australia, has developed a Series of National Guidelines (SoNGs) to provide nationally consistent advice and best practice guidance to public health units in responding to a notifiable disease event. These guidelines include the National Guidelines for Public Health Units - Management of TB (<http://www.health.gov.au/cdnasongs>). This guideline includes recommendations on contact tracing for tuberculosis.

The SoNGs were developed based on a review of relevant literature, including WHO guidelines, existing protocols from other public health authorities and in consultation with experienced infectious disease professionals. The guidelines have been endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

Each state and territory has developed jurisdiction-specific guidelines on the control of infectious diseases, including tuberculosis control. Further information on Tuberculosis control in Queensland can be found at the Queensland Health website:
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/chrisp/tuberculosis/about_TB.asp