



## Building Capacity on STI Diagnosis in Turkmenistan

**The CAPACITY Project and AED gathered experts from three countries to enable physicians and laboratory specialists in Turkmenistan improve their knowledge of STI diagnostics**



*Dermatology-venereal disease physicians and lab specialists are learning modern methods of clinical interpretation of STI laboratory diagnostics tests by using ELISA testing in comprehensive serological STI diagnostics. In the above photo, 28 specialists from dermatology-venereology hospitals and AIDS centers take part in a training program jointly organized by the CAPACITY and AED Projects.*

In the summer of 2006 the USAID funded CAPACITY and Academy for Educational Development (AED) projects joined their efforts in building the STI diagnostic capacity in Turkmenistan. The Enzyme-Linked Immuno-Sorbent Assay, or ELISA as it is commonly known, is a technique used to detect the presence of antibodies or antigens. ELISA testing equipment was supplied to Turkmenistan by the British Government in 2002, but a lack of capacity among health workers to interpret the tests results limited the equipment's effectiveness. In response to a request from the Turkmenistan Ministry of Health USAID supported training of health professionals in the interpretation of ELISA test results.

Specialists from three countries, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan met at a workshop in Ashgabat on 14-19 July 2006 and elaborated on the diagnostic implementation of ELISA for several sexually transmitted infections. The workshop participants from Turkmenistan represented physicians and laboratory specialists from the Central Dermatology-Venereological Hospital of Ashgabat, the National AIDS Center in Ashgabat, the Turkmen State Medical Institute, Ashgabat and the Dermatology-Venereological Hospitals and AIDS Centers from seven Velayats (provinces). The Workshop was facilitated by the professors and lecturers from the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Epidemiology of the Kazakh Medical University, Department of Skin and Venereal Diseases of the Kazakh National Medical University and of the Research Center of Skin and Venereal Diseases under the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

From Turkmenistan 28 specialists of the dermatology-venereology hospitals and AIDS centers participated in the workshop. The workshop consisted of lectures, case studies, and practical training on topics related to serological diagnostics, STI immunity, natural history of the diseases phases and clinical diagnosis. Participants expressed a great interest in the materials presented and actively participated in discussions and case studies. The pre- and post-test results of participant knowledge showed a significant overall increase in understanding of STI laboratory diagnosis and the interpretation of results from 56% to 96%.

