

STRAMA *Swedish Strategic Programme for the Rational Use of Antimicrobial Agents and Surveillance of Resistance*

Annual report 2001

Background

STRAMA was founded in 1995 as a result of discussions between the Swedish Reference Group for Antibiotics (SRGA), the Medical Products Agency, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control (SMI) and others. The primary objective was to create a decentralized organization in order to gain national recognition and to facilitate local surveillance activities and projects. Through the County Medical Officers for Communicable Diseases regional STRAMA groups were established in every county. According to a survey performed in 2001 there are today 20 primary care STRAMA groups and 17 hospital groups. STRAMA is supported economically by the Swedish Government with SEK 3 million annually. In this year's agreement between the state and the Federation of County Councils both parties estimate there is a demand for continuation after year 2002. This year's funds have been allocated to the functional management of the network, national and local projects. The alignment for STRAMA's work during 2001 has been developed according to the goals set in the proposed national plan to prevent resistance to antibiotics.

International activities

In May 2001 Sweden arranged a follow-up conference to the EU-meeting in Copenhagen 1998; "The Microbial Threat". This conference, held in Visby, gathered 150 specialists from 29 countries within the EU. STRAMA was an important resource both in planning and carrying out the meeting. A conference on the use of antibiotics in Europe was arranged in Brussels November 15-17 during the Belgian presidency. Many people from the national coordination committee of STRAMA participated actively in the program as lecturers and chairmen. STRAMA contributes data from Sweden as part of a recent project studying the use of antibiotics in Europe (ESAC-European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption). In addition to this, the chairman of STRAMA has been invited to discussions with the EU commission on creating a European network of national coordination committees.

National activities

The national group of STRAMA

Twelve authorities and organizations are presently represented in the national coordinating committee of STRAMA. During 2001 the Association of Local Authorities has also joined. The group has met twice during the year to prioritize national projects and to report on ongoing activities. On behalf of the group's commission the daily activity is lead by a working committee with authority to act in questions of immediate interest.

STRAMA seminar

The STRAMA seminar is an annual national gathering of all the regional groups in STRAMA both from primary care and hospitals. At this meeting current situations regarding antibiotics and resistance to antibiotics in Sweden are discussed. Another meeting for the discussions of antibiotics was arranged in collaboration with SRGA and SMI during the fall of 2001. At both of these educational days approximately 100 persons attended and a questionnaire confirmed the value of having this kind of symposia.

National STRAMA projects

- A survey focusing on diagnosis/prescriptions, “The Registration of Infectious Diseases 2001”, and carried out in five counties, was put together and presented during 2001. A total of approximately 7000 primary care visits were documented. Of these, 70 % were respiratory infections. The present recommendations are relatively well followed, but there is room for improvements. Children over the age of two with acute otitis media almost always received antibiotics, although the new recommendations show this is not always necessary. Half of the cases with acute bronchitis received antibiotic treatment. This shows that continuous active interventions are needed to improve the use of antibiotics.
- STRAMA’s Intensive Care Study continued during 2001. The aim of this study is to initiate a systematic, continuous registration and analysis of the problems in the intensive care unit setting regarding infections. The interest for this study has been great and more than 25 intensive care units in the country have joined. The use of antibiotics has been shown to be frequent in intensive care in Sweden. On average the patients get at least one antibiotic daily. The resistance to antibiotics is widely spread among several common bacteria in intensive care.
- On account of a growing occurrence of pneumococci with decreased susceptibility to penicillin in the south of Sweden during the beginning of the 1990s, a project was launched in 1995, where traditional measures to control infection (identification, isolation, tracking) in order to reduce the spread of these pneumococci was carried out. A report on the project was published after two years. A summary and an evaluation of the results from the first six seasons of the project are pending.

A comparison of the prescription of antibiotics in different communities with similar structure has been performed during 2001. This showed large local variations (a more than two fold difference) for children (0-6 years of age) and elderly (older than 80 years of age). No obvious reasons for these differences have been found. Therefore a study has been planned during 2002-2003 to determine if the reason is a difference in morbidity, in health care organization and accessibility, or is related to physician-assessment.

The infection year

The National Corporation of Swedish Pharmacies has, since the beginning of the 1990s, had an annual theme focusing on some of the more common diseases. During 2001 the theme was “Infectious Diseases”. The infection year was planned and carried out in collaboration with STRAMA both nationally and locally. Many different activities to educate the public at large, as well as physicians and nurses, were accomplished. As an example of such an activity geared towards prescription providers throughout Sweden,

fictitious case reports were written which were used for support in the local therapy discussions. This method was greatly appreciated and in Skåne a project will continue using this model with economical support from STRAMA.

Local projects

During 2001 all the local STRAMA groups had the opportunity to apply for economical support for local projects. A basic requirement for the projects to obtain support from STRAMA was that the objectives of the project would fall under the main goals for STRAMA and that the study would be conducted in close collaboration with the local STRAMA group.

The following projects were granted support during 2001:

- ❑ A follow-up study of the use of antibiotics in nursing homes
- ❑ The current situation regarding antibiotic resistance among urinary tract pathogens in geriatric patients and from nursing homes in the county of Stockholm
- ❑ Production of educational material for school-children regarding infections, antibiotics and resistance to antibiotics as well as evaluation of the information
- ❑ Surveying and quality assurance in the use of antibiotics in an university hospital before and after the introduction of a comprehensive control program regarding infectious diseases
- ❑ Determination of antibiotic amounts and resistant bacteria in a hospital sewage system

Lectures and symposia

In collaboration with SRGA and the Medical Products Agency, STRAMA has arranged a meeting of specialists who outlined new guiding principles for the management of pharyngotonsillitis. These recommendations have also been translated into English. Many collaborators from STRAMA held lectures at a resistance to antibiotics seminar, which was arranged by the Folkuniversitetet in collaboration with STRAMA during the spring. Several local STRAMA groups, drug and therapeutics committees, physician societies of different clinical specialties and other networks have invited the chairman of STRAMA to lectures and discussion groups. These meetings and opportunities have had high priority and provide necessary information in the daily practical routine in medical care, which must be fundamental when new routines etc. are being prepared.

Other activities

STRAMA's website www.strama.org has been revised giving better possibilities for an interactive exchange of information between STRAMA's network members. Every six months current statistics regarding the use of antibiotics in Sweden, per county and in different age groups, are being published on STRAMA's website. In collaboration with SRGA data regarding resistance to antibiotics are being published, as well as other important information regarding antibiotics and resistance. The website is visited frequently. During the year an electronic newsletter has been sent out. This letter contains reports from current national and international studies, as well as suggestions regarding literature, conferences etc.

In regard to the increasing number of case reports with MRSA in the country, a press release was sent out during the spring with the headline "Improved surveillance and patient care hygiene are needed to meet the threat of MRSA". The following debate showed a great interest and a need for additional education in certain personal categories in primary care and in medical care of the elderly in the council. At the end of the year plans were initiated for a special educational day primarily aimed towards charge nurses and directors from different housing environments.

The work of STRAMA has led to many international contacts and many requests for material translated into English. Therefore a contact with a medical translator has been established. There are plans to translate several documents to be presented on STRAMA's website.

Solna February 20, 2002

On behalf of The National STRAMA Group

Otto Cars
chairman

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