

Press Release: European University Cyprus, School of Medicine

Securing optimal diagnosis and management of diphtheria through microbiological awareness: Collaborative framework with European University Cyprus, School of Medicine, World Health Organization and European Center for Disease Control and Prevention

The School of Medicine, European University Cyprus (EUC), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Collaborating Centre for Diphtheria, Public Health England, United Kingdom and the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC), co-organized an International Workshop on the Laboratory Diagnosis of Diphtheria from 9 - 11 November 2018; an effort which received the support of the Ministry of Health of Cyprus. Lectures and hands-on workshop training took place in the state-of-the art microbiology laboratories of the EUC, School of Medicine in Nicosia, Cyprus.

As stressed by Professor Androulla Efstratiou, Director at WHO and Adjunct Professor at EUC, School of Medicine, diphtheria and related infections are still being reported within the European Region and remain a serious public health problem in regions of South East Asia, South America and Africa, while carrying a notable mortality rate. In addition, new laboratory methods for detection and diagnosis, and mandatory reporting in the European Union, render its prompt identification and appropriate management an important priority. Today, significant gaps in the capacity to diagnose diphtheria exist in Member States of the WHO European Region. This finding prompted this workshop, which was represented by 11 Member states.

The collaborated effort by European University Cyprus, the World Health Organization and the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention served to increase the awareness about diphtheria infections and equipped participants with appropriate laboratory skills to confirm the disease using specialised laboratory diagnostic methods. Hands-on practical workshops ranged from preparation of specialized media, selection of colonies, screening tests to preparation of toxigenicity tests.

The investment of EUC, School of Medicine in Infectious Diseases was underscored by the fact that postgraduate students of the EUC Master program “Infectious diseases: prevention and control” were able to take part in this important scientific event. The significance of this workshop lies not only in its public health implications at a local, regional and international level, but also adds to the continuum of educational initiatives in the field of infectious diseases supported and organized by the School of Medicine, EUC.









