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Foreword

The internationally renowned success of the Brazilian response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and sexually transmitted diseases (STD) has resulted, in addition to the national policy of universal, free access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment and to the quality of available information, especially from studies and research on several areas of knowledge. The results of these studies and research, supported by the *Programa Nacional de DST/Aids – PN-DST/Aids* (National STD/AIDS Program) of the *Secretaria de Vigilância em Saúde do Ministério da Saúde* (Health Surveillance Department of the Ministry of Health) and by research supporting agencies on the different levels of government, have been subsidizing several governmental strategies in this field.

A significant amount of new knowledge frequently leads to innovative processes and products of interest for the *Sistema Único de Saúde – SUS* (National Health System), coming from health professionals who are dedicated to investigation in their service and not restricted to universities and research institutes.

Given its specificity, STD/AIDS investigation in public health is, due to its social dimension, oriented towards the incorporation of research results to the governmental decision-making process. For this reason, besides the necessary national investment in research and technological development, STD/AIDS investigation requires incentive for quick dissemination of results from supported projects by means of adequate promotion in relevant publications.

Taking this into consideration, the PN-DST/Aids requested the *Departamento de Epidemiologia da Faculdade de Saúde Pública da Universidade de São Paulo* (Department of Epidemiology of the School of Public Health at the University of São Paulo) to prepare a pioneering project under the coordination of professor Cássia Buchalla and colleagues. Such project enabled the adequate qualification of Brazilian HIV/AIDS and STD researchers as regards the publication of their research results in internationally renowned publications. It was prepared and carried out in collaboration with Professor Norman Hearst from University of California San Francisco.

With this objective, the PN-DST/Aids set up a national selection process so that researchers could submit their publication proposals, whose research was close to completion and (with) already available databases. These proposals, assessed and selected by a selection committee, after the highly successful qualification strategy implemented by the Universidade de São Paulo, resulted in important international publications. Among these is the special supplement of *AIDS* journal on AIDS research in Brazil, which, for the first time, published a supplement dedicated to research in a single country, in October of 2005.

The PN-DST/Aids also supported another comparable initiative: a course organized by the *Núcleo de Estudos para Prevenção da Aids – NEPAIDS* (Center for AIDS Prevention Studies), aiming at qualifying human resources for research, and which was also financed by the World AIDS Foundation and the Fogarty Foundation and had the collaboration of the *Programa Municipal de DST/Aids* (STD/AIDS Municipal Program) from the city of São Paulo.

This supplement, which consolidates part of these results, emphasizes the importance of both initiatives and represents a landmark in the recent partnership among the PN-DST/Aids, the Universidade de São Paulo and the NEPAIDS. Such partnership is very promising and will certainly bear fruit in terms of qualifying Brazilian researchers in different areas of knowledge. Finally, this supplement will certainly contribute to broader national and international visibility of the significant Brazilian effort towards research and technological development in this field.

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