Priority medicines for Europe and the world

World Health Organization — For the first time, EU countries have more people over 65 years of age than under 15 years of age. Echoing the trend seen in Europe, much of the rest of the world is moving in a similar direction. Priority medicines for Europe and the world 2013 update calls for pharmaceutical researchers to adjust their research and development efforts to account for this shifting demography.

The report focuses on pharmaceutical gaps, where treatment for a disease or condition may soon become ineffective, are not appropriate for the target patient group, does not exist, or are not sufficiently effective. This report is an update to the 2004 version and is a collaborative product of experts from WHO, EU Member States, industry, academia and other interested stakeholders including patients.


HIV treatment recommendations

World Health Organization — The new WHO HIV treatment guidelines recommend offering antiretroviral therapy (ART) earlier. Recent evidence indicates that earlier ART will help people with HIV to live longer, healthier lives, and substantially reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

Consolidated guidelines on the use of antiretroviral drugs for treating and preventing HIV infection encourage all countries to initiate treatment in adults living with HIV when their CD4 cell count falls to 500 cells/mm³ or less. WHO has based its recommendation on evidence that treating people with HIV earlier, with safe, affordable, and easier-to-manage medicines can both keep them healthy and lower the amount of virus in the blood, which reduces the risk of transmission.

The new recommendations also propose providing antiretroviral therapy to all HIV positive children under five years of age, pregnant and breastfeeding women with HIV, and all HIV-positive partners where one partner in the relationship is uninfected. WHO continues to recommend that all people with HIV with active tuberculosis or with hepatitis B disease receive antiretroviral therapy.

Another new recommendation is to offer all adults starting to take ART the same daily single fixed-dose combination pill. The recommended treatment is now a combination of three antiretroviral drugs: tenofovir and lamivudine (or emtricitabine) and efavirenz, as a single pill, given once daily.

If countries can integrate these changes within their national HIV policies, and back them up with the necessary resources, they will see significant health benefits at the public health and individual level. WHO is also encouraging countries to enhance the ways they deliver HIV services, for example by linking them more closely with other health sectors.

18th Model List of Essential Medicines and Model List for Children

World Health Organization — The 19th Expert Committee on Selection and Use of Essential Medicines met in April 2013 to review and update the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and the List of WHO Essential Medicines for Children. The committee considered 52 applications and made 15 reviews.

The 18th WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and the 4th list of WHO Essential Medicines for Children was finalized by the Committee at the end of their deliberations.


• WHO Model List of Essential Medicines at http://www.who.int/entity/medicines/publications/essentialmedicines/18th_EML_Final_web_8Jul13.pdf and


International summit on medicines shortages

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) — a world federation of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists, recently convened an International summit on medicines shortages in Toronto, Canada.

While there has been considerable attention on the issue of medicines shortages in North America and in some European countries, there has been less attention given to the global reach of this ongoing crisis and to possible global responses.

The Summit was attended by 50 experts representing governments and regulatory authorities, the generic and innovative pharmaceutical industries, wholesalers, group purchasing organizations, pharmacists, various medical specialties, dentists and patient organizations. Input was also provided by the World Health Organization.

The Summit recommends that the following approaches should be investigated.

• In order to advance transparency and increase communication between all stakeholders on existing shortages, each country should establish a publicly accessible means of providing information. The mid to long term aim should be to aggregate this information at international level.

• A global process to determine a list of critical or vulnerable products should be developed. This would be most easily done by a multilateral organization. The list will require continuous revision and will inform regulatory responses, procurement practices and risk mitigation strategies. Each country could adapt the list to local conditions.

• All procurers of medicines are urged to move towards active procurement processes that assure the continuity of supply of quality medicines.

• All countries are encouraged to remove unnecessary variability of regulatory practices within and between countries.

• All regulatory authorities need to advance responsible transparency in relation to all regulatory processes.

• All countries should investigate the potential to establish a national body...
charged with gathering and sharing information about demand for and supply of medicines within their jurisdiction.

- All countries are encouraged to develop evidence-based risk mitigation strategies which might include strategic buffer stocks and stock piles, contingency planning, pandemic planning and capacity redundancy appropriate to their national needs.


**USAID Deliver Project: supply chain management**

The USAID Deliver Project has published the following new material:

*Alternative Public Health Supply Chains: Reconsidering the Role of the Central Medical Store and Getting Products to People Without a Traditional Central Medical Store.* The report and policy brief identify a set of approaches that either de-emphasize the Central Medical Store (CMS), or enacts a radical shift in management. These approaches potentially offer a superior solution to improving supply chain performance benefits compared to approaches that continue to emphasize the CMS. Available at http://j.mp/13HDMkG.

French and Spanish translations of the updated *Logistics Handbook: A Practical Guide for the Supply Chain Management of Health Commodities. The Logistics Handbook*, updated in 2011, offers practical guidance for managing the supply chain, with an emphasis on health commodities. It is intended to help programme managers who design, manage, and assess logistics systems for health programs. In addition, policymakers, system stakeholders, and anyone working in logistics will also find it helpful as a system overview and overall approach. Available at http://j.mp/1bGeeMh

New assessment guide and tool for HR capacity development in the public health supply chain. Effective public health supply chains require motivated and skilled staff with competency in various essential logistics functions. In an effort to help public health supply chain managers in developing countries assess and improve the management of their human resources, a new toolkit is available at http://j.mp/13n5mre

In highlighting HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment efforts, The project’s updated CD toolkit, *Resources for Managing the HIV & AIDS and Laboratory Supply Chains*, is now available. The CD contains a selection of tools, reports, and briefs for supply chain and programme managers and advisors involved in designing, implementing, and managing in-country supply chains for HIV and AIDS and laboratory commodities available at http://j.mp/16MeTeo

The Number 2, 2013 issue of the *Supply Chain Management (SCM) Newsletter* is available at http://j.mp/1cRZlnN

Reference: USAID Deliver Project at http://deliver.jsi.com/