The new WHO Guidelines on the Pharmacological treatment of persisting pain in children with medical illnesses have recently been published. The guidelines can be downloaded without charge from the WHO website.

A new recommendation in the guidelines is a two step approach to treat the child's pain according to its severity. The use of a three step ladder is no longer recommended for pain in children and therefore, the use of codeine is no longer a part of the treatment strategy. WHO has identified morphine as one of the key medicines necessary to treat chronic pain in children.

The document includes chapters on the various systems used to classify pain and on the evaluation of pain, which reviews the available tools for routine pain measurement in children. There is a focus on the importance of moderate to severe pain being addressed in paediatric patients.

These guidelines address persisting pain in children caused by conditions such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, sickle-cell disease, burns, trauma, and phantom limb pain and were developed to support countries relieve pain in their paediatric populations.

Recommendations were developed following a careful and transparent appraisal of available evidence and are presented for the pharmacological treatment of mild, moderate and severe pain.

Three brochures for quick reference are published simultaneously. Each brochure aims at a specific audience. They bring highlights from the guidelines for physicians and nurses; pharmacists; and for policy-makers such as medicines regulatory authorities, hospital managers and health insurance managers.

The printed version is still under preparation, but hardcopies of
The *Persisting Pain in Children Package* can be pre-ordered at the WHO Bookshop. This package contains the WHO guidelines on the pharmacological treatment of persisting pain in children with medical illnesses; the three highlights brochures mentioned above; a dosing card; two pain scales for children (4 years of age and up; and 6 - 10 years); and a wall chart for waiting rooms. The package price is Sfr 40/US$ 48 (developing countries: US$ 28).

More information on these and other WHO treatment guidelines on pain can be found at the WHO website.

**New: Guide on Estimating Requirements**

One of the barriers for access to controlled medicines is the functioning of the estimates system. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs requires that countries estimate their need for controlled substances annually. Only if they submit these estimates, other countries will issue export licences. Some countries do not submit these estimates to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB); other countries estimate too low and do not adjust the estimates in the course of the year if necessary.

For this reason, the World Health Organization took the initiative to, and developed jointly with the INCB, the INCB-WHO Guide on Estimating Requirements for Substances under International Control. This guide is intended to assist competent national authorities in identifying methods for calculating the quantities of controlled substances required for medical and scientific purposes. At the same time, it will help those authorities to prepare the estimates and assessments of annual requirements for controlled substances that countries are required to furnish to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). It describes the system of estimates and assessments and the various methods commonly used to quantify the requirements of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. It also provides an overview of the major issues that need to be considered in order to apply these methods accurately.

The guide will become available in all six official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian). It can be downloaded for free from the WHO website.

**Report on legal barriers for access in 12 European countries**

The Institute for Pharmaceutical Sciences, Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Clinical Pharmacology at Utrecht University published the results of the quick scan of legislations undertaken as part of the ATOME project. WHO is a partner in this project.

The aim of this quick scan was to analyse the national legislation in the 12 ATOME target countries in order to detect aspects that are a potential barrier to the access and availability of opioids in the respective country. The quick scan is the basis for the selection of nine countries where a more detailed deep scan of legislations will be undertaken as the next step of the ATOME legislation review.

See also our controlled medicines website
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