To

22nd Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines

World Health Organization - WHO

As Corporación Esclerosis Múltiple Chile (CORPEM), the Chilean non-profit organization that represents the interest of thousands of patients with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and their families, we would like to support the application of the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) for the introduction of the pharmacological therapies Glatiramer acetate (injection of 20 mg/mL and 40 mg/mL), Fingolimod (capsules of 0.5 mg) and Ocrelizumab (injection of 300 mg/10 mL) to the Essential Medicines List of the World Health Organization (WHO). By this missive, we would like to share our experience with you and communicate the importance of the access to these treatments.

CORPEM Chile started from a social movement, in 2015, that requested to the Chilean government for equality of the public and private health system to access to all the immunomodulatory medicines available then. The Chilean laws incorporated MS in 2010 to the Government Health Program, AUGE, for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease, giving also economical aids to access to the treatments of that moment: interferon β1 and glatiramer acetate. The adoption of this resolution came under the understanding of the quick development of the disease and neurodegeneration of the patient when there is no access to treatments or rehabilitation, and that the principal affected are young adults, starting their studies or work activities. As hundreds of scientific studies can confirm, the disease is progressive in the neurodegeneration, so a therapeutic climb is needed. By 2015, more than 800 patients had access to the ‘first line’ of treatments, the pharmacological therapies recommended to start with after the diagnosis. However, from them, almost an 18% had no response to the treatment or, with years, the therapies were
losing effects, so the necessity of new treatments became significant. Fingolimod, available since 2012 and covered by this law, was the option for these patients then.

Until July of 2015, when an outstanding modification of the law, made by the president Michelle Bachelet, changed the access to pharmacological treatments, reducing the aids just to interferon-β1 and glatiramer acetate for MS treatment. About 80 patients that were in the moment with Fingolimod, and many more with Teriflunomide and Dimethyl-fumarate, lost their right to access to their medicines with economical aids. Therefore, we started a movement for the access to a dignified health attention, where the patients did not should suffer because of economical situation, geographic location or health system. We created and coordinated a social campaign, ‘#unidosporlaesclerosismultiple’ (United for MS [defeating]), that even crossed frontiers. The campaign was so powerful that, at the end of 2015, the government drafted a new law to ensure the access of MS patients, regardless of their health system, to new therapies: Fingolimod and Natalizumab. Both were essential because of the mechanisms of these therapies. Natalizumab had reported benefits for MS patients with no JC virus risk, and Fingolimod was the option to the patients who do not respond to the ‘first line’ treatments.

After these campaigns and good outcomes, patients and their families preserved the contact and solidarity, and CORPEM grows every year in members, organized activities and visibility. We have achieved a large list of events to sensitize de community and an important number of judicial cases in favor of our members. We organize educational events for patients and their families and, thanks to this laws of 2010 and 2016, nowadays more than 2000 patients have access to a good quality of life, accessing to the diagnose and treatment of this disease. Our mission is to ensure the good care and a dignified living of patients with MS, knowing that today there is a possibility for them to develop a normal life thanks to these treatments. With our efforts and the support of the members, an update of the law of 2016 will now ensure the access to new therapies: Ocrelizumab, Alemtuzumab and Cladribine, for MS treatment. Consequently, this June, besides the patients that already have their treatments, people with Primary Progressive MS, a more aggressive form of the disease, and patients with advanced disease development will enjoy access to a better quality of life. Considering that Chile has an estimated incidence ratio of 18/100.000 habitants, to assure the access to the available and best treatments is fundamental. The opportunity of these patients of
counting on with the treatments to confront MS give them the chances to share with their families, develop a career, take part of the community activities, continue with their hobbies, and to think about a future out of a wheel chair.

For these reasons and considering our experience, we, respectfully, make a plea to you to include these pharmacological treatments to the ‘Essential Medicines List’ of the World Health Organization. We are the evidence of the benefits that the access to treatments entails, and we would like to share with gratitude what we have had to experience.

With best Regards,

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For more information about us, please visit our webpage www.esclerosismultiplechile.cl, or @corpemchile in our Social Media in Twitter o Instagram (Material in Spanish).