

Progress in the rational use of medicines

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on rational use of medicines: progress in implementing the WHO medicines strategy;

Recalling the report on rational use of medicines by prescribers and patients, discussed at the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly, and followed by adoption of resolution WHA58.27 on antimicrobial resistance;

Recalling resolutions WHA39.27, WHA41.16 and WHA47.13 on the rational use of drugs, WHA41.17, WHA45.30 and WHA47.16 on ethical criteria for medicinal drug promotion, WHA43.20 and WHA45.27 on the WHO Action Programme on Essential Drugs, WHA47.12 on the role of the pharmacist, WHA49.14 and WHA52.19 on the revised drug strategy, WHA51.9 on cross-border advertising, promotion and sale of medical products using the Internet, and WHA54.11 on the WHO medicines strategy;

Recognizing the efforts of WHO in collaboration with governments, universities, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations, in areas related to health-care delivery systems and health-insurance programmes in order to improve the use of medicines by prescribers, dispensers and patients;

Aware of the core components of WHO's strategy for promoting the rational use of medicines;¹

Wishing to promote evidence-based rational use of medicines by providers and consumers and better access to essential medicines;

Aware that irrational use of medicines continues to be an urgent and widespread problem in the public and private health sector in developed and developing countries with serious consequences in terms of poor patient outcome, adverse drug reactions, increasing antimicrobial resistance and wasted resources;

Acknowledging that successful implementation of previous resolutions on antimicrobial resistance cannot be achieved without addressing the global problem of irrational use of medicines;

¹ Document WHO/EDM/2004.5.

Recognizing that many countries do not have a stringent drug-regulatory authority nor a full national programme or body to promote rational use of medicines;

Emphasizing that global initiatives to increase access to essential medicines should adhere to the principle of rational use of medicines, and include adherence by patients;

Concerned that insufficient attention and resources are being directed towards tackling the problem of irrational use of medicines by prescribers, dispensers and consumers;

Emphasizing the need for a comprehensive, sustainable, national and sector-wide approach to promote the rational use of medicines;

Recognizing that financing of medicines and methods of arrangements for provider payments can have a major impact on rational use, and that appropriate policies on financing health care are required;

Recognizing that there may be incentives for the irrational use of medicines throughout the health system, for example in some circumstances which give rise to conflict of interest;

Concerned that direct-to-consumer or Internet sales may give rise to irrational use of medicines;

Convinced that it is time for governments, the health professions, civil society, the private sector and the international community to pledge their commitment, including adequate resources, to promoting the rational use of medicines,

1. URGES Member States:¹

(1) to invest sufficiently in human resources and provide adequate financing in order to strengthen institutional capacity in order to ensure more appropriate use of medicines in both the public and private sectors;

(2) to consider establishing and/or strengthening, as appropriate, a national drug regulatory authority and a full national programme and/or multidisciplinary body, involving civil society and professional bodies, to monitor and promote the rational use of medicine;

(3) to consider developing, strengthening and implementing, where appropriate, the application of an essential medicines list into the benefit package of the existing or new insurance funds;

(4) to develop and strengthen existing training programmes on rational use of medicines and ensure that they are taken into account in the curricula for all health professionals and medical students, including their continuing education, where appropriate, and to promote programmes of public education in rational use of medicines;

(5) to enact new, or enforce existing, legislation to ban inaccurate, misleading or unethical promotion of medicines, to monitor promotion of medicines, and to develop and implement programmes that will provide independent, nonpromotional information about medicines;

¹ And regional economic integration organizations, where appropriate.

(6) to develop and implement national policies and programmes for improving medicine use, including clinical guidelines and essential medicines lists, as appropriate, with an emphasis on multifaceted interventions targeting both the public and private health sectors, and involving providers and consumers;

(7) to consider developing, and strengthening where appropriate, the capacity of hospital drug and therapeutic committees to promote the rational use of medicines;

(8) to expand to national level sustainable interventions successfully implemented at local level;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to strengthen the leadership and evidence-based advocacy role of WHO in promoting rational use of medicines;

(2) in collaboration with governments and civil society, to strengthen WHO's technical support to Member States in their efforts to establish or strengthen, where appropriate, multidisciplinary national bodies for monitoring medicine use, and implementing national programmes for the rational use of medicines;

(3) to strengthen the coordination of international financial and technical support for rational use of medicines;

(4) to promote research, particularly on development of sustainable interventions for rational medicine use at all levels of the health sector, both public and private;

(5) to promote discussion among health authorities, professionals and patients on the rational use of medicines;

(6) to report to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly, and subsequently biennially, on progress achieved, problems encountered and further actions proposed in the implementation of WHO's programmes to promote rational use of medicines.

Eleventh plenary meeting, 23 May 2007
A60/VR/11

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