

## Maintaining a National Essential Medicine List for Cancer In Malaysia:

## Where do we stand?

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## INTRODUCTION

- The WHO developed the Essential Medicine List since 1977.
- Aims to help countries prioritize and select medicines to include in their national essential medicine list, and increasingly the national reimbursable medicine list.
- Updated every 2 years.
- Consideration of cancer medicine is substantial since the 1994 version.
- Specific indications included since 2015, especially for targeted therapies.
- Each medicine application is screened according to:
  - Safety & efficacy
  - Disease burden and public health needs
  - Cost-effectiveness

## METHODS & MATERIALS

- Review of the antineoplastic chapter betwee the WHO Essential Medicine List (EML) and Malaysian National Essential Medicine List (NEML) were made.
- The number of medicines in each list were compared between 2007 and 2019.
- Include cytotoxics, targeted therapies, immunomodulators, hormones and supportive medicines.
- The Malaysian NEML only started including antineoplastic agents since 2014 (3rd ed).

# Cancer Medicine in WHO EML & Malaysian NEML 80 60 40 22 20 0 2007 2013 / 2014 2019 2021 Number of Cancer Medicine (WHO) Number of Cancer Medicine (Malaysia)

Figure 1: Number of cancer medicine in WHO EML (Blue) and Malaysian NEML (Red).

## **Essential Medicines**

Medicines that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population.

These are medications to which people should have access to at all times in sufficient amount.



## The selection of essential drugs Hisport of a WHO Expert Committee. Technical Report Series (4) Warte Health Digazzanion, Garlene (1977)

## DISCUSSIONS

- An audit of national EML for 135 countries was conducted with the 2013 WHO EML.
- Only included 25 cytotoxics (support medication excluded)

Bulletin of the World Health Organization
Research
Essential medicines for cancer: WHO recommendations and national priorities
Jane Robertson <sup>a</sup> , Ronald Barr <sup>b</sup> , Lawrence N Shulman <sup>c</sup> , Gilles B Forte <sup>d</sup> & Nicola Magrini <sup>d</sup>

Country	Median No.
All (n = 135)	17
Malaysia	21

Figure 2: Overall median number of cancer medicine

Income group	Median No.
Low-income (n=28)	9
Lower middle income (n=44)	18
Upper middle income (n=42)	19
High income (n=18)	20
Malaysia	21

Figure 3: Median number of cancer medicine according to income group.
(Malaysia - upper middle income group)

WHO Region	Median No.
Africa	13
Americas	19
South-East Asia	21
Europe	18
Eastern Mediterranean	23
Western Pacific	19
Malaysia	21
Ivialaysia	21

Figure 4: Median number of cancer medicine according to WHO Region. (Malaysia - Western Pacific region)

## **Limitations**

- Approved indications are not included or specified in the WHO EML until 2015.
- Reliance on Ministry of Health Formulary (bluebook) more than Malaysian NEML in daily practice.

## CONCLUSION

- The Malaysian NEML consistently includes more than 80% of cancer medicines listed in WHO EML.
- Alignment of National EML with WHO may help to prioritize drug procurement and improve access in the public health sector.

### References

- 1. Essential Medicines for Cancer: WHO recommendations and national priorities. Robertson J, Barr R, Shulman LN, Forte G, Magrni N, Bull World Health Organ. 2016;94(10): 735-42
- 2. WHO Essential List of Medicine 2007, 2013 and 2019.
- 3. Malaysian National Essential Medicine List 2012, 2014 and 2019.