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Oral rehydration salts + zinc sulfate (co-packaged)

MSF strongly supports the inclusion of co-packaged oral rehydration salts + zinc sulfate for treatment of acute diarrhoea in children, in both the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children.

In the current EML, oral rehydration salts (ORS) and zinc sulfate are present separately: ORS in section 17.5.1 (Oral rehydration) and zinc sulfate in section 17.5.2 (Medicines for diarrhoea), with the note “In acute diarrhoea, zinc sulfate should be used as an adjunct to oral rehydration salts”.

In order to follow the 2004 WHO/UNICEF recommendation that acute diarrhoea in children should be treated with both ORS and zinc, and as only 7% of 42% of children receiving ORS for acute diarrhoea receive also zinc sulfate, the inclusion of a co-packaged product in the WHO Model Lists of Essential Medicines would help lower the mortality and morbidity associated with acute diarrhoea.

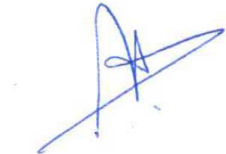
MSF would like to draw the attention of the Expert Committee on the following facts:

- Co-packaged ORS + zinc must be manufactured and co-packaged under conditions and practices required by the international GMP regulations to assure that quality is built into the design and manufacturing process at every step.
- The distribution of co-packaged ORS + zinc to health structures, communities and patients should follow the regular distribution channels for medicines.
- The co-packaged ORS + zinc should be used for management of diarrhoea with no or mild dehydration (plan A and B), in health centers and communities. Nevertheless, for severe dehydration (plan C) and in hospital settings, as often zinc needs to be started with IV rehydration or the amount of ORS needed is higher than the one included in the co-packaged product, ORS and zinc must also remain separately available.
- Previously all products in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children were also on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines: if this logic is maintained, the co-packaged ORS + zinc sulfate should also be included on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

MSF has been using ORS in its programs since more than 30 years and zinc sulfate since 2005.

MSF urges the 22nd Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to include the co-packaged ORS+ zinc product in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children and therefore in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

For Médecins Sans Frontières

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'MH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Myriam Hekens, MD, MPH
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