

# Essential Drug (Medicines) Concept

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## Objectives

- What is an essential medicine concept
- What are the criteria for selection of essential medicines
- What is WHO essential drug list (EDL)

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# Origin of the Essential Medicine Concept

- Introduced in 1975
- The reality that for millions of people -- particularly the poor and disadvantaged -- medicines are unavailable, unaffordable, unsafe or improperly used.

# Aims of ED Concept

- Focus on drugs that satisfy health needs
- Promote access to total healthcare for all
- Reduce cost of public healthcare
- Reduce number of drugs in public healthcare system (safety and cost implications)

# Definition

- "Essential drugs are those that satisfy the health care needs of the **majority of the population**. They should be available at **all times**, in **adequate amounts** and in **appropriate dosage forms** throughout the country"

## Criteria for choosing Medicine for the Essential Medicine List

- Pattern of prevalent disease
- Treatment facilities
- Training and experience of prescribers
- Financial resources
- Genetic, demographic and environmental factors

# Criteria - For each Medicine selected

- Sound and adequate data for efficacy and safety from clinical studies - scientifically proven
- Only one drug per category - e.g. one beta2 agonist (salbutamol)
- Preferably single compounds
- Generic names

## WHO Model EDL

- The first EDL contained 200 drugs (1977)
- The list is not static
- Revised every two years
- It becomes a tool in **guiding the selection** of essential medicines per country

# Complementary List EDL

- Essential medicines for priority diseases, for which specialized diagnostic or monitoring facilities, and/or specialist medical care, and/or specialist training are needed.
- In case of doubt medicines may also be listed as complementary

# Advantages of EDL

- Promoting better procurement policy and practice from using a restricted list
- Reducing cost of procurement
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of pharmaceutical use
- Effective control of pharmaceuticals in public circulation
- Enforcing rational prescribing, by focusing on a limited list of pharmaceuticals