

Meeting Report

MEETING ON ADDRESSING URGENT ISSUES PERTAINING TO ANTIMALARIAL DRUG MANAGEMENT TO FACILITATE ACCELERATED ELIMINATION OF MALARIA FROM THE GMS COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION



26–28 February 2018
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

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MEETING REPORT

MEETING ON ADDRESSING URGENT ISSUES PERTAINING TO ANTIMALARIAL DRUG
MANAGEMENT TO FACILITATE ACCELERATED ELIMINATION OF MALARIA FROM THE
GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

Convened by:
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
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26–28 February 2018

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NOTE

The views expressed in this report are those of the participants of the Meeting on Addressing Urgent Issues Pertaining to Antimalarial Drug Management to Facilitate Accelerated Elimination of Malaria from the GMS countries of the Western Pacific Region and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the conveners.

This report was prepared by the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific for Member States in the Region and for those who participated in the Meeting on Addressing Urgent Issues Pertaining to Antimalarial Drug Management to Facilitate Accelerated Elimination of Malaria from the GMS countries of the Western Pacific Region in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 26 to 28 February 2018.

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Keywords:

Antimalarials / Health Policy / Malaria - epidemiology, prevention and control / Mekong valley

ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	artemisinin-based combination therapy
CIP	Coalition of Interested Partners
CNM	National Center for Entomology, Parasitology and Malaria Control (Cambodia)
CoRE	Centre of Regulatory Excellence
DDF	Department of Drugs and Food (Cambodia)
DER	Drug and Efficacy Response
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EML	essential medicine list
EMP	Essential Medicines and Health Products
EMT	Essential Medicines and Health Technologies
G6PD	Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase
Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GMP	Global Malaria Programme
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
GTS	<i>Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2020</i>
iDES	integrated drug efficacy surveillance
MME	Mekong Malaria Elimination
MVP	Malaria, other Vectorborne and Parasitic Diseases
NMP	national malaria programme
NRA	national regulatory authority
NTG	national treatment guideline
oAMT	oral artemisinin monotherapy
RDT	rapid diagnostic test
RRP	Regional Regulatory Partnership
RSM	rapid supply mechanism
RSS	Regulatory Systems Strengthening
SRA	Stringent Regulatory Authority
TES	therapeutic efficacy studies
TGA	Therapeutic Goods Administration
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USP	United States Pharmacopeia
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY

Accelerated malaria elimination in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries requires the availability and full implementation of updated national treatment guidelines (NTGs) based on the latest therapeutic efficacy studies (TES). The rapid decline of malaria cases following concerted efforts at elimination of multidrug-resistant forms of falciparum has presented new challenges. Among these challenges, the following two are the most important: the continued evolution of resistance requiring the regular updating of first- and second-line antimalarial medicines for foci of resistance; and the sourcing of increasingly small quantities of these drugs within a short time frame to ensure full implementation of revised guidelines in these foci.

Recent experience has demonstrated that NTGs can be updated rapidly by ministries of health for the management of resistant foci; however, their implementation is delayed due to regulatory challenges faced when importing new artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) and problems in procuring small quantities of new ACTs for use in such foci. Full implementation of WHO recommendations on the use of primaquine to arrest the spread of falciparum malaria and the problem of relapses in vivax malaria due to poor compliance with primaquine regimens also remain challenging. As recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), a virtual limited stockpile of ACTs has been initiated by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) to expedite country access to antimalarial medicines. Now, countries are encouraged to utilize the rapid supply mechanism (RSM) and ensure no delays occur in sourcing new ACTs for management of malaria in resistant foci. In the August 2017 meeting on WHO malaria treatment guidelines in the Western Pacific, problems associated with updating NTGs to address effective management of malaria in resistant foci, addressing regulatory constraints and procuring small quantities of new ACTs to use in resistant foci were identified as challenges requiring urgent solutions.

The Malaria, other Vectorborne and Parasitic Diseases (MVP) unit of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific coordinated this meeting, bringing together representatives from ministries of health, staff from national malaria programmes, procurement divisions and national regulatory authorities (NRAs) to: identify appropriate first line treatments for management of malaria in resistant foci and possible alternatives based on current TES data; agree on a mechanism for the accessing the RSM of antimalarial medicines; discuss regulatory constraints to fully implementing updated malaria treatment policies; and address the continuing challenge of availability of substandard ACTs and artemisinin monotherapies in Western Pacific Region countries of the GMS.

Conclusions:

- (1) Countries of the GMS have made considerable progress towards updating their NTGs and have done considerably well to prevent the emergence of new foci of resistance.
- (2) Updated NTGs are not fully operationalized in most GMS countries, particularly related to

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