



PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF ZAMBIA

The Lusaka Statement on the Role of the Pharmacist in the Prevention & Management of HIV/AIDS and in Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) in Zambia

Rationale:

According to the World Health Association (WHA), national estimates in Zambia indicate that in 2004, the adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS was 19% and about 1,000,000 people were living with HIV/AIDS. The mode of transmission is predominantly heterosexual, but mother-to-child transmission is also significant. Data also show that AIDS cases peak amongst women in their twenties and amongst men in their thirties. The HIV prevalence is significantly higher amongst women than men and much higher in the urban population (around 20%) than the rural population (around 12%). The epidemic is estimated to have left over 600,000 children orphaned. HIV/AIDS morbidity and mortality also result in an estimated 50% of general hospital admissions and more than 70% of specialized hospital admissions.

In addition, in sub-Saharan Africa, as many as 9 in 10 people may not know their HIV status.

In 2005, the estimated number of people under 50 years in Zambia needing antiretroviral therapy (ART) was 183,000 and a target of 100,000 people receiving ART by the end of that year was announced by the Zambia government.

Zambia has developed policies and guidelines for both testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The HIV testing policy requires full pretest counseling. It also requires that diagnostic testing and counseling be offered to people living with HIV/AIDS as part of a comprehensive care package. The Zambia government has also considered putting in place a policy of opt-out HIV testing.

In 1987 an emergency plan on safe blood supply was launched. All district, provincial and central referral hospitals now have blood transfusion facilities, and all blood products are now screened for HIV.

In 2002, the Zambia government decided to make ART widely available to everyone needing treatment and funded the purchase of ARV medicines for 10,00 people, to be provided through the public health service. Initially the treatment was provided in the public sector at a subsidised rate, but from 2005 the Zambia government declared that the entire antiretroviral package would be provided free of charge in the public sector. A comprehensive implementation plan was then rolled out in 2005 to provide access to treatment across the country along with treatment guidelines using international standards. These plans have been evaluated and new implantation plans subsequently developed and published by the Zambia government. According to National AIDS Council, there are now only about 170,000 people on ART, which is 55% of the estimated number of people requiring treatment.

The results of the 2007 Demographic Health Survey indicate real and lasting difference in the lives of Zambia's children and women. The new statistics show a 30 per cent reduction in mortality among children under the age of five since 2001 – from 168 to 119 per 1,000 live births. Maternal mortality ratio has dropped from 729 to 449 per /1000 live births. The national prevalence rate is falling from 15.6 to 14.3 percent.

Pharmacists can contribute their knowledge, skills and expertise in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and in Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) and are committed to working collaboratively with National Control programmes in the support of nationwide goals. Pharmacists are accessible health professionals who maintain the respect of their communities through provision of confidential and equitable service and care.

The commitment of the Pharmacy profession in Zambia

At a participatory workshop on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH), held on 12-13 June 2008 in Lusaka, and hosted by the Ministry of Health in Zambia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia and the Commonwealth Pharmacists' Association, over 200 members of the Pharmacy profession met to discuss the role of Pharmacists in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and their role in MNCH.

The predominating message to come from these discussions was that Pharmacists have the knowledge, skills and expertise which they believe could be more proactively applied to the control of these communicable diseases in Zambia.

Furthermore, members of the Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia were united in their commitment to the communities they serve. To this end, Pharmacists want to provide a greater public health role in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and in MNCH specifically, and in health promotion generally.

The Lusaka Statement is a compilation of recommendations made at the Workshop to expand the role of Pharmacists in practice settings in the prevention of these communicable diseases and in the continual improvement of accessibility to treatment and services by all members of the community in Zambia. Further discussion, both within the profession and with government, will be necessary to define these roles in greater detail. In addition, The Lusaka Statement is a declaration by the Pharmacists of Zambia to affirm the commitment made by over two hundred Commonwealth Pharmacists at the CPA Conference in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, in 2003 and to implement the recommendations of The Lusaka Statement, as resources permit, to achieve beneficial health outcomes for the people of Zambia.

**General statements from the
Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association
"Ocho Rios Statement on the Role of the Pharmacist
in the Prevention & Management of HIV/AIDS"
Jamaica, August, 2003**

- Pharmacists are members of multi-professional health care teams
- Pharmacists are the primary legal custodians of medicines and have the knowledge and expertise to provide authoritative information relating to medicines
- Pharmacists play an important role in helping to break down the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS
- Pharmacists can deliver professional treatment, advice and information in a caring and confidential environment
- Pharmacists will maintain patient privacy and confidentiality

- Pharmacists are committed to working with governments in the development and implementation of policies and strategies to improve access to information and in the provision of affordable and sustainable antiretroviral and antibiotic therapies

Increasing Pharmacists' contribution to the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and in MNCH in Zambia

The Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia will direct its efforts and resources towards:

1. advocating for sustainable and cost-effective partnerships between public and private sector stakeholders to co-ordinate improved patient access to HIV/AIDS and MNCH services leading to increased case detection, provision of referral information for counselling, testing and diagnosis and authoritative information on treatment options
2. working strategically with the Ministry of Health, other related ministries and government agencies to provide an enabling environment for the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at long-term sustainability of service provision to HIV/AIDS patients
3. facilitating member access to up-to-date information on antiretroviral therapy and international standards for HIV/AIDS care
4. providing members with continuing education programs on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, with particular focus on access in outreach areas, or facilitating access to such programs provided by other institutions
5. promoting HIV/AIDS and MNCH awareness campaigns and providing relevant materials for members to undertake consumer and/or staff education and training activities, separately or in collaboration with other agencies
6. promoting the inclusion of Pharmacists in HIV/AIDS and MNCH management teams, especially in the area of clinical services and Drug and Therapeutic Committees
7. nominating Pharmacists to positions on national government and other professional Boards and Committees relating to HIV/AIDS and MNCH
8. nominating Pharmacists to government/industry decision-making committees to advise on the registration, procurement and uninterrupted distribution of Pharmaceutical supply
9. nominating Pharmacists to government decision-making committees to provide evidence-based medicines expertise during the development of treatment guidelines
10. reinforcing the Society's code on ethical prescribing and dispensing

The Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia will encourage its members to:

11. provide services without prejudice or discrimination and maintain patient confidentiality
12. use all available resources to remain informed and up-to-date on evidence-based treatment of HIV/AIDS in line with national and international treatment guidelines
13. train, or facilitate training, for support staff under supervision, in the provision of HIV/AIDS treatment and information

14. participate fully in local, national and PSSL-initiated community HIV/AIDS and MNCH education and awareness campaigns
15. provide/negotiate/advocate for appropriate facilities for confidential patient counseling in Pharmacies, clinics and workplaces
16. collaborate with other health care providers and with government initiatives in implementing a comprehensive care concept in the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients

The Role of the Pharmacist at Community Level

Given their accessibility, Pharmacists can help reduce HIV transmission by informing, educating and communicating with all members of the community in:

17. participating in awareness campaigns, e.g. World AIDS Day, to promote the Pharmacist as an authoritative and accessible source of information on HIV/AIDS and MNCH within the community
18. using daily opportunities to communicate prevention information to patients/consumers
19. providing information on voluntary counselling and testing services (VCT)
20. referring patients/consumers to VCT services to assist in early detection and diagnosis
21. providing consumer information on sexually transmitted infections, including referral services
22. spreading prevention messages using all available media outlets: newspaper advice columns, talkback radio, TV interviews and community health announcements
23. participating in community, school and faith-based activities
24. supporting other community-based HIV prevention programmes

Pharmacists can deliver quality treatment and care for HIV patients by:

25. maintaining high standards of pharmacy practice and observing any official Code of Practice
26. working as members of multi-disciplinary healthcare teams
27. acquiring skills in patient counseling
28. providing quality pharmacist/patient interaction to promote adherence and optimise treatment outcomes (monitoring treatment, providing information on medicines, nutrition and opportunistic infections)
29. promoting holistic and wellness concepts to HIV positive patients and providing psychosocial support or referral to support service providers
30. supporting families within national standard guidelines on MNCH agreed by clinicians, or referring patients to appropriate facilities
31. treating opportunistic infections, including sexually transmitted infections, within treatment guidelines prescribed by a clinician
32. maintaining patient medication records with appropriate sharing of patient histories between service providers

33. recording and notifying incidents of observed drug resistance
34. undertaking courses in the management of pharmaceutical supply
35. ensuring an up-to-date knowledge of the national HIV/AIDS Guidelines

The Role of the Pharmacist at Government Level:

Working with the Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia, Pharmacists can:

36. build working relationships with politicians and officials within the Ministry of Health
37. contribute to policy development and implementation as it relates to Pharmacy practice, Pharmacy education and public health (with special focus on reducing stigma and discrimination)
38. advocate for and assist government and relevant authorities in the development and use of evidence-based treatment guidelines
39. advocate for and assist government and appropriate agencies to combat the importation and distribution of counterfeit and substandard medicines
40. advocate for increased employment of pharmacists in drug procurement and distribution nationwide
41. advocate and negotiate with government to increase patient access to affordable and sustainable antiretroviral therapy, for antenatal patients where appropriate
42. advocate and negotiate with government to increase patient access to information and services in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases
43. work with the university of Zambia to review curriculum to ensure it meets the changing trends and requirements of Pharmacy practice in Zambia
44. work with government to formulate strategies and incentives to encourage Pharmacists to work in outreach areas to ensure adequate human resources for the delivery of quality treatment and care

The Role of the Pharmacist in Collaboration with other Organisations

Working collaboratively, the Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia and its members can maximise impact by:

45. interacting with other health professionals in the design and implementation of HIV prevention strategies
46. interacting with networks of people living with HIV to better meet their needs and requirements
47. interacting with other health professionals to optimise treatment and care of HIV patients, in both hospital and community settings
48. joining with other health-related professional organisations in the hosting of inter-professional workshops, seminars and continuing educational lectures
49. assisting major data collecting agencies to strengthen and improve systems for the strategic use of HIV/AIDS and MNCH related information

50. inviting other health-related professions to be represented on the Society's committees and negotiating for reciprocal representation
51. promoting medical and Pharmacy practice research within Zambia
52. continue to involve Pharmacy and other health-related student bodies in Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia activities

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