



April 11, 2025

To: The Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines  
World Health Organization  
Geneva, Switzerland

### **ADDA Statement of Support for Methylphenidate on WHO Essential Medicines List**

Dear Esteemed Members of the WHO Expert Committee:

The Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) founded in 1988, is the leading global organization dedicated to improving the lives of adults with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

We write today in support of including methylphenidate on the World Health Organization's Essential Medicines List for pediatric use.

We recognize that childhood treatment directly impacts adult outcomes. Without early intervention, children with ADHD face higher risks of long-term consequences we regularly witness in the adult population we serve, including:

- **Increased risk of anxiety, depression, substance use disorders, and suicide.**
- **Lower rates of educational attainment and employment.**
- **Greater likelihood of legal troubles and social exclusion.**

Research confirms methylphenidate as evidence-based, first-line ADHD treatment. However, many low- and middle-income countries lack access to this medication due to its absence from the WHO Essential Medicines List. When children with ADHD receive early, effective treatment, they are more likely to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. They are also more likely to enter adulthood with the skills, confidence, and stability needed to build productive, fulfilling lives.

Unfortunately, in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the lack of WHO endorsement has resulted in widespread barriers to diagnosis and treatment. Children in these regions are often left to struggle with an untreated medical condition that impacts on every area of life. As these children grow up, they face greater challenges as adults including reduced access to care, due to years of unmet needs and increased complexity of symptoms.

Including methylphenidate on the Essential Medicines List would be a powerful step toward:

- **Health equity**, by ensuring children in underserved regions can access the same standard of care as those in high-income countries.
- **Mental health destigmatization**, by recognizing ADHD as a serious medical condition deserving of treatment.
- **Breaking the cycle**, by giving today's children with ADHD the support they need to become tomorrow's thriving adults.

We urge the WHO to consider the implications of untreated ADHD. Early access to treatment like methylphenidate is not only an investment in childhood development, but also a proven intervention that improves long-term health and economic outcomes into adulthood.

Thank you for your leadership in promoting universal access to essential medications. We are hopeful that your decision will reflect the urgency of this issue for children and the adults they will become.

To your success,



Duane Gordon  
President  
Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)