



18 April 2025

WHO Expert Committee on Selection and Use of Essential Medicines

By email to: emlsecretariat@who.int

RE: Application reference: A.19 Methylphenidate – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Dear Members of the Essential Medicines for Children Committee

ADHD New Zealand is a not-for-profit organisation supporting around 50,000 members of the Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) community in New Zealand through information provision, services and advocacy.

ADHD New Zealand supports the inclusion of methylphenidate in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for the treatment of ADHD in young people aged 6 to 17 years and the corresponding application “A.19 Methylphenidate – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder”.

Against a background of global shortages of ADHD stimulant medication including methylphenidate, New Zealand’s ADHD community is under severe stress. For around 70 percent of people with ADHD, medication brings significant improvement in life outcomes – especially when combined with other treatments. The medication shortages have shown in stark relief how many people with ADHD depend on methylphenidate to function well at school, at work, and socially.

Considerable evidence suggests that children taking ADHD medication benefit from improved academic and social functioning, which translates to improved self-esteem, lower rates of self-medication with drugs or alcohol, and decreased risk of substance abuse.

Here is a comment from one of our members:

"My son was diagnosed with ADHD almost two years ago, and promptly treated with first rubifen SR and now Concerta. Prior to his diagnosis and medication, we knew he was the most amazing boy however from the age of around 7 life was extremely tough. He could not manage himself, and was constantly in trouble at school mostly for 'not listening' or 'not following instructions' and many times he didn't even know why he was in trouble. He was refusing to go to school at least twice per week, and getting sent home for storming out of class one or two other days. Our family life became hell, and we got to the point that our beautiful boy was saying he was so bad/dumb that he should just die, heartbreaking.



Cue a school change (legendary) and medication, and it was almost immediately a 180. He was staying for the whole day, and one of the first things he noticed was that he wasn't in trouble anymore (still wasn't sure why). He is now 11, and he has rebuilt his self-esteem and is absolutely thriving, happily taking his medication that helps him get through each day successfully. He recently did his pepeha [introduction in Te Reo Māori] in front of the whole school assembly, unbelievable. I cannot stress enough how valuable methylphenidate has been in his journey, along with his absolutely golden teacher. He has gone from feeling so worthless he talked about dying, to absolutely thriving."

Research continues to build our understanding of ADHD and the most effective treatments, but at this point in time methylphenidate is widely considered to be the preferred first-line medication and we support its inclusion in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

Thank you for considering this letter of support.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Cookson".

Suzanne Cookson
Chair
ADHD New Zealand
www.adhd.org.nz