

April 16, 2025

Re: A.19 Methylphenidate – attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Dear Members of the WHO Expert Committee,

On behalf of CADDRA - Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance, we are writing to strongly advocate for the inclusion of methylphenidate on the World Health Organization's Model List of Essential Medicines for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

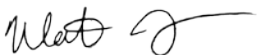
ADHD is a global public health concern, affecting an estimated 5–7% of children worldwide and 3-5% in adults. If left untreated, ADHD is associated with a cascade of adverse outcomes: academic underachievement, social marginalization, increased risk of accidents, and a significantly higher likelihood of developing substance use, anxiety, and depressive disorders in adulthood.

Methylphenidate is a proven, safe and highly effective first-line treatment for moderate to severe ADHD. Endorsed by the Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines (CADDRA), American Academy of Pediatrics, NICE and WHO guidelines themselves, it consistently demonstrates 70–80% symptom reduction and improvements in focus, behavior, and quality of life. Decades of research and clinical experience have confirmed its safety profile when prescribed responsibly.

Importantly, access to methylphenidate improves not only individual outcomes, such as educational success and social functioning, but also reduces the risk of long-term consequences including criminal involvement, unemployment, and mental illness. These outcomes are especially critical in low- and middle-income countries where diagnosis and treatment access are limited, and where Essential Medicine status could drastically improve affordability and inclusion in national health programs.

Furthermore, methylphenidate's low cost (available as a generic), combined with its substantial clinical and societal benefits, make it a highly cost-effective public health intervention. Its inclusion in the Essential Medicines List would facilitate standardized ADHD care, promote equity in mental health, and align with WHO's strategic goals on child development, education, and universal health coverage.

As medical professionals and researchers dedicated to improving ADHD outcomes in Canada and beyond, we urge the WHO to recognize the pressing need to increase global access to evidence-based treatment. Including methylphenidate on the WHO Essential Medicines List is a necessary and impactful step forward.



Signed on behalf of the CADDRA Board of Directors
Martin Gignac MD, FRCPC
Chair, Board of Directors



Signed on behalf of the CADDRA Advisory Council
Doron Almagor MD, FRCPC
Chair, Advisory Council