



13/03/2025

EML Secretariat & WHO Expert Committee on Selection and Use of Essential Medicines,  
[emlsecretariat@who.int](mailto:emlsecretariat@who.int).

Dear Sir/ Madame,

**RE: Application for Methylphenidate in the WHO Essential Medication List**

I would like to share my perspective on behalf of the Malaysian Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Association (MYCAPS).

Several professional organisations have advocated for reconsidering methylphenidate's inclusion in the World Health Organization's (WHO) Essential Medicines List (EML). Notably, in 2024, the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (ESCAP) officially endorsed its inclusion, emphasising the medication's well-established efficacy and safety profile.

In Malaysia, methylphenidate is a **prescription medication** primarily used for the treatment of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children aged six and above, as well as in adults. It is also prescribed for managing narcolepsy. The brand names include Ritalin, Ritalin LA, Concerta, and Medikinet MR.

The Ministry of Health Malaysia has approved methylphenidate for ADHD treatment, as the **Clinical Practice Guidelines 2020 outlines**. These guidelines recommend pharmacological intervention for children over six years old when symptoms persist and cause significant impairment despite behavioural and environmental interventions. Methylphenidate is recognised as the first-line pharmacological treatment in such cases.

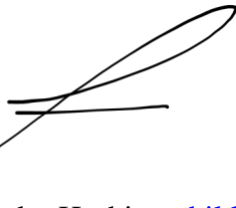
As a controlled substance under the **Poisons Act 1952**, methylphenidate requires a prescription from a registered medical practitioner. In Malaysia, only psychiatrists are authorised to prescribe it to children above six and adults, while paediatricians may prescribe it exclusively to children above six and not in adults. Not many paediatricians see and treat adolescents with ADHD. Similarly, not all psychiatrists see and treat adults and adolescents with ADHD. These adults and adolescents are seen, assessed, and receive treatment mainly from psychiatrists who are familiar with ADHD or child and adolescent psychiatrists. These medical professionals **must monitor** their patients to determine efficacy and detect potential side effects.

Despite its clinical importance, methylphenidate has been the subject of multiple appeals for inclusion even here. In Malaysia, periodic shortages of medication are a recurring issue. Without fail, we experience supply shortages at the beginning, middle, and end of each year, often being informed that availability is limited. This shortage persists despite a growing demand, driven by an increasing number of individuals—children and adults—seeking assessment and treatment.

Ensuring a **continuous and stable** supply of methylphenidate is crucial. Parents and their children, many of whom are adolescents preparing for essential examinations, frequently express their frustration over inconsistent medication access and availability. Similarly, adults with ADHD rely on this medication to maintain daily functioning. The ongoing supply disruptions significantly impact their well-being, academic performance, and professional responsibilities.

I urge all relevant stakeholders to take the necessary steps to address these challenges, ensuring that individuals who rely on methylphenidate receive uninterrupted access to their prescribed treatment.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line and a short vertical stroke.

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