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Ophthalmology

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Re: Public Comment in Support of the Application for Inclusion of Sunscreen for Persons with Albinism on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines

Dear Members of the Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines,

I am writing to express my strong support for the application to include sunscreen as an essential medicine specifically for individuals with albinism on the World Health Organization's Model List of Essential Medicines.

Patients with oculocutaneous albinism face heightened vulnerability to ultraviolet (UV) radiation due to the lack of melanin in their skin. This results in an extraordinarily high risk of developing skin cancer and other UV-related health complications, particularly in regions with intense sun exposure. In many low- and middle-income countries, the burden of skin cancer among people with albinism is significant, often leading to preventable morbidity and premature mortality.

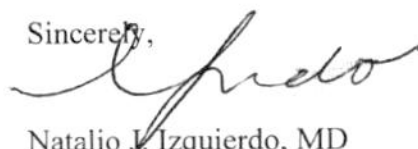
Sunscreen is a critical and life-saving health intervention for this patient population. It serves not only as a protective barrier against harmful UV rays but also as a public health tool that contributes to the cancer preventive measures, particularly for vulnerable and often marginalized populations such as those with albinism.

Despite its medical necessity for patients with albinism, sunscreen is still not universally accessible, often classified as a cosmetic product rather than a therapeutic one. Its inclusion on the Essential Medicines List would be a vital step toward improving access, reducing health inequities, and affirming the global commitment to health for all.

I respectfully urge the Expert Committee to recognize sunscreen as an essential medicine for individuals with albinism, and to endorse its inclusion in the Essential Medicines List accordingly.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued commitment to equitable global health.

Sincerely,



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