

A.25 Sunscreen - albinism

MSF supports the inclusion of broad-spectrum SPF50+ sunscreen in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) and WHO Model List of Essential Medicines List for Children (EMLc), specifically for adults and children living with albinism.

The submission from The UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Rights by Persons with Albinism, The Global Albinism Alliance, and The Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change proposes SPF50+ sunscreen as an essential medicine. This proposal aligns with MSF's commitment to prioritizing the most vulnerable, ensuring quality and safety of medicines, and acknowledging the intersection of climate change and health.

Based on MSF's operational experience in low-resource, intense-UV settings, MSF recognizes the critical role of sunscreen in helping to prevent skin cancers among people with albinism. Access to preventative care is a humanitarian imperative. The failure to ensure equitable access to effective sun protection can exacerbate morbidity and mortality among persons with albinism, a population which already faces neglect and challenges in accessing care in many countries.

Sunscreen was included on the 10th EML in 1998 and subsequently removed by the Expert Committee in 2005 as described in detail in this year's submission. There has been no disagreement about the public health relevance of sunscreen for the prevention of skin cancer in susceptible people.

MSF thus urges the 25th Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to recognize this pressing need and restore sunscreen to the EMLs, while giving WHO Member States and regulators normative guidance on how to ensure, test and monitor effective and safe formulations of sunscreen for people with albinism, based on the list of active ingredients which are recognized to provide protection from harmful UVA and UVB radiation.




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