



RED CROSS WAR MEMORIAL
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WHO Expert Committee
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6 April 2025

Re: Comment in Support of Blinatumomab for Inclusion in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children

Dear WHO Expert Committee

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of blinatumomab on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children (EMLC).

I am a paediatric oncologist working in an upper middle-income country on a continent where many children living in low and lower-middle income countries have limited access to treatment and access to innovative therapies is limited. In addition, some drugs essential to treatment are not always readily available. Survival in some settings is as low as 20% and this is a tragedy in the case of B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (B-ALL) which is the commonest cancer globally and which has a demonstrated survival of 80% in the global north. And in middle-income settings, outcomes are much improved but still not comparable and the burden of toxicity is very significant.

B-ALL is also one of the WHO's Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer's six index cancers. In low-income settings the burden of B-ALL treatment for children is considerable both in terms of toxicity from the currently used drugs as well as a higher rate of relapse. Blinatumomab offers a highly effective, targeted option for these patients and has transformed outcomes in high-income countries. It is estimated to improve outcomes by approximately 20% for upfront disease and 30% for relapsed disease, and has an acceptable toxicity profile with toxicity that is lower than that of current therapy.

The inclusion of blinatumomab on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines for Children would be a critical step toward expanding equitable access to this life-saving therapy in low- and middle-income countries. It would also support integration into national treatment protocols and facilitate procurement mechanisms aligned with WHO's Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer.

I strongly support this application and urge the Committee to approve blinatumomab for inclusion.

Yours sincerely

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