

To whom it may concern

Re: Application for addition of Blinatumomab to WHO essential medicines list

On behalf of World Child Cancer, we would like to support the addition of Blinatumomab to the WHO essential medicines list for children.

World Child Cancer is an international charity with a mission to improve survival rates, care, and the quality of care for children with cancer and their families in low- and middle-income countries. You will be aware that childhood cancer is among the most treatable forms of cancer. Despite this, children in many low- to middle-income countries have as low as 20% chance of survival, compared to better than 80% in high-income countries. There are many factors which lie behind this global challenge, including a lack of access to effective and affordable cancer medicines.

World Child Cancer is a stakeholder to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (the GICC). We work across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with a significant number of our programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (B-ALL) is the most common cancer in children and with the reduction in Burkitt lymphoma in sub-Saharan Africa B-ALL has become the commonest cancer there too. B-ALL is also one of the GICC 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 of their disease. In addition, some drugs essential to treatment are not always readily available.

Blinatumomab is a newer agent which has been demonstrated to have significant clinical efficacy and is estimated to improve outcomes by approximately 20% for upfront disease and 30% for relapsed disease. Blinatumomab has an acceptable toxicity profile with toxicity that is lower than that of current therapy. Treating B-ALL with blinatumomab will be manageable in low and low middle income countries and will in addition to improved survival reduce the duration of therapy and hence treatment burden.

We feel as a global charity that equity of treatment is important and that the children of low and low middle income countries should have access to medication such as Blinatumomab which have significant advantages over conventional therapy alone.

On behalf of World Child Cancer, we strongly support the addition of Blinatumomab to the WHO essential medicines list for children, and we thank you for your consideration.

Rachel Hollis, Chair, World Child Cancer UK

Luke Thomas, CEO, World Child Cancer UK

Simon Bailey, Trustee, World Child Cancer UK
Professor of Paediatric Neuro-Oncology and Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
Sir James Spence Institute of Child Health, Newcastle upon Tyne