



31 March 2023

The WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines
Department of Essential Medicines and Health Products
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

Letter of Support: Ravidasvir 200 mg inclusion into WHO's EML

Mahidol University Thailand strongly supports the inclusion of ravidasvir 200 mg in the WHO List of Essential Medicines (EML) - for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection.

According to WHO statistics:

- There are approximately 58 million people living with HCV infection (PLHCV).
- HCV infection is responsible for approximately 300,000 fatalities each year.
- Only 13% of the PLHCV received treatment, and majority of them are living in the low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- Only 23% of PLHCV know their status hence the name "Silent Epidemic" resulting in exclusion from public health system that would otherwise save their lives.

High price of direct-acting, antiviral (DAA) agents is one of the major hindrances toward the goal of achieving WHO Elimination of Viral Hepatitis target. With high acquisition cost, the public health system in LMICs is unable to afford nationwide scaling up treatment programme. Thailand for instance, has been slow in the treatment uptake partly due to the issue of cost (around USD 700 per 12-week treatment) and limited DAA options available to the health system. We believe that the inclusion of ravidasvir into the WHO EML will subsequently enable the health system (through Ministry of Public Health Thailand and National Health Security Office) to expand affordable treatment options under its test and treat programme to reach greater number of HCV patients nationwide who will otherwise be excluded. Furthermore, the coverage could also be expanded to screen and diagnose asymptomatic HCV patients for early treatment with the affordable DAA options available.



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Mahidol University

Ravidasvir is the first HCV treatment developed through a South-South Collaboration, a multi-country, multi-continent initiative established by the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), the Ministry of Public Health Thailand, the Ministry of Health Malaysia, Egyptian pharmaceutical company Pharco, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). Clinical trials for ravidasvir (STORM-C) were conducted in Thailand and Malaysia between July 2016 and December 2020. The results of the STORM-C trials showed that the ravidasvir/sofosbuvir combination was safe and effective in curing hepatitis C for 97% of enrolled participants, including those with genotype 3 infection - the hardest to treat genotype.

Mahidol University through the Faculty of Pharmacy and the Faculty of Medicine at Siriraj Hospital, has been exploring pathways to make ravidasvir available to the population in Thailand. Mahidol University strongly believes that the listing of ravidasvir in the EML will support greater access of this important treatment to most needed but neglected patients in a timely manner. We therefore urge the Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to include ravidasvir 200 mg in the WHO EML.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Surakit Nathisuwan'.

Assoc. Prof. Surakit Nathisuwan
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and on behalf of signatories hereunder

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Wisdom of the Land

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