



# OSLO MEDICINES INITIATIVE

Solidarity Transparency Sustainability



## SESSION SUMMARIES

# Webinar Series

13 January - 10 February 2022

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# 1 Reflections on the markets for innovative medicines in the WHO European Region 2021

**13 January 2022**

The pharmaceutical market is changing. Although a few years ago many of those diagnosed with a rare disease or genetic disorder had little hope of a good quality of life due to the lack of treatment options, today there is an increasing number of effective novel therapies on the market for rare diseases and diseases affecting small patient groups. However, many novel therapies come with high price tags, which are often too costly for national governments to provide them to all who would benefit. What can be done? How can the industry be encouraged to continue innovating while also reducing barriers to access for all patients?

This webinar, the first in a series of five launched by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Government of Norway under the Oslo Medicines Initiative (OMI), will explore this issue. The OMI is a tangible outcome of the 2019 World Health Assembly resolution (WHA 72.8) on improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines and other health products. This webinar will introduce the OMI, detailing its aim for finding common ground among key stakeholders and its underlying themes of transparency, accountability and sustainability. All webinars in this series will involve experts and panellists representing Member States, industry and civil society.

This first webinar will look at the dynamics of the pharmaceutical market today, discussing and debating potential policy options and directions for increasing equitable access to effective, high-priced novel medicines in the WHO European Region. A question-and-answer session with participants will follow the discussion.

## 2 Models for financing novel medicines to support innovation as a global public good

20 January 2022

Innovation is the backbone of the pharmaceutical sector. New medicines and therapies, such as those for rare diseases and personalized medicines, require considerable investment and risk on behalf of the manufacturers. The high cost of many new products in these areas is deemed unaffordable by governments and what constitutes a fair return on a manufacturer's investment and risk is hotly disputed. Whether innovation is being pursued in areas representing priority health needs versus those offering higher returns is also debated. In this regard, many would argue that the current innovation research and development paradigm is no longer fit for purpose.

This second webinar in the Oslo Medicines Initiative series looks at the current research and development system for biomedical products and considers its outputs and impact vis-à-vis patient needs. This raises the question: are the right medicines available at the right prices? If not, how can the system be modified? What policy changes around pricing, health technology assessment and reimbursement might better serve patients' needs while simultaneously promoting innovation and a successful pharmaceutical industry? With speakers and panellists representing different stakeholders, the webinar will cover these and other issues. A question-and-answer session with participants will follow the discussion.

# 3 Pricing, reimbursement and coverage policies for sustainable access to affordable innovative medicines

27 January 2022

As an increasing number of effective novel products for rare diseases, gene therapies and personalized precision medicines come to market, governments are under pressure to make them available to all those who would benefit from them. However, many of these therapies come with high price tags, making them unaffordable for national health systems. While it is clear that these medicines are expensive to develop and to approve, they do offer genuine therapeutic advances for patients and, therefore, manufacturers should be rewarded for their investment and risk. Apart from regulating prices, what policy options are available to governments for addressing the challenges of access and affordability? Do different price/volume calculations or new pooling and purchase models offer solutions? How can transparency inform this discussion and do Member States have access to the information that they need?

This third webinar in the Oslo Medicines Initiative series will consider such questions and will do so from the perspectives of both low- and high-income countries. Speakers and panellists representing the key stakeholders will discuss these issues with a view to developing proposals for novel policy interventions and accountability mechanisms that offer win-win solutions. A question-and-answer session with participants will follow the discussion.

# 4 Non-financial incentives for stimulating affordable innovation

**3 February 2022**

Today there is an increasing number of effective medicines coming on the market in areas that have previously been neglected, offering patients major gains in terms of quality of life and longevity. Taking into account the considerable investment and strict and lengthy approval times behind them, many of these medicines come with high price tags paid from national health budgets. While it is recognized that manufacturers are entitled to seek equitable returns, questions are often raised as to whether the prices are too high, thereby limiting their availability to those who would benefit from them, and whether manufacturers should in fact focus less on high-return niche markets and more on innovations in areas of greater clinical need and access.

The fourth webinar in the Oslo Medicines Initiative series will look at potential non-financial incentives, both those already in practice and others under development. If prices are too high and there remain areas of genuine unmet need for patients, what non-financial incentives can governments provide to ensure that innovation is not stifled and that a healthy medicine pipeline representing genuine clinical advance is in place? Perspectives from both public and private sectors will inform the discussion, with the aim of going beyond the traditional innovation paradigm to consider out-of-the-box solutions. A question-and-answer session with participants will follow the discussion.

## 5. Solidarity and social contracts in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**10 February 2022**

As life-saving products that promote health and alleviate illness, medicines are not a traditional commodity. The pharmaceutical market structure is a unique one not subject to the usual demand-supply structure and forces of other industrial products. Moreover, medicines occupy a unique position in global discussions around human rights – the right to health – and public goods. Countries across the globe are committed to achieving universal health coverage under goal 3 of the SDGs and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines is central to that aim.

It is clear that both public and private sectors have important roles to play in this debate, which will be the focus of this fifth and final webinar in the Oslo Medicines Initiative series. By applying the concept of a social contract, understood as an implicit acknowledgment of the duties and obligations of the different stakeholders to one another, speakers and panellists will examine these roles, and ask how public and private stakeholders can work together to find win-win solutions that support the SDGs. The role of corporate social responsibility will be explored. A question-and-answer session with participants will follow the discussion.