



Press Release – 20 May 2003

**Unaffordable Medicines
Data from New Pricing Manual Confirms Problem**

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Action International (HAI) announce the release today of *Medicine Prices*, a pricing manual outlining how to collect and analyze data for thirty widely-used medicines.

Medicine prices vary between countries and regions and historically, relatively little has been known about how those prices are determined.

“In developing countries, poverty places medicines out of reach of one-third of the population,” says Margaret Ewen from HAI Europe. “Better information on prices, price differences and the factors contributing a medicine’s final cost are essential if governments and other medicine purchasers are to find ways of making medicines more affordable. “

The manual proposes a new price survey methodology, suggests how to analyse price data, and identifies broad policy options to achieve more affordable prices, including comparisons of innovator brand products with their generic equivalents.

Before publication, the survey methodology was tested over two years in Armenia, Brazil, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Peru, Philippines, South Africa and Sri Lanka. These are a few of the findings:

- A one dose treatment of innovator brand ciprofloxacin for gonorrhoea in Armenia and Kenya requires 3 days’ wages and 1 hour in Sri Lanka
- For the same treatment, if in Armenia you use the generic equivalent rather than the innovator brand, you save 2.5 days pay
- In Kenya, the brand premium across 10 medicines is over 400%, primarily because generic prices are very low.
- The consumer price of innovator brand nifedipine 10mg in private pharmacies is about six times higher in South Africa than in Brazil
- In South Africa, all of the private retail pharmacies surveyed had innovator brand omeprazole available but only 50% had the most sold generic.

Email the Documentation Centre at WHO EDM (edmdoccentre@who.int) to obtain a copy of the manual. Data from the pilot studies will be available on HAI's web site (www.haiweb.org/medicineprices) in early June.

The manual is being published as a working draft and will be revised late 2004 following the completion of more field testing.

If you are interested in conducting a price survey or want more information contact Margaret Ewen, HAI Europe (info@haiweb.org) or Andrew Creese at WHO EDM (medicineprices@who.int)

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