

# Access and Control Newsletter

The Access and Control Newsletter is sent by the World Health Organization, Department of Essential Medicines and Pharmaceutical Policies, Quality and Safety: Medicines Unit.

The Newsletter provides you with the latest news from WHO on the following issues:

- access to medicines controlled under the international drug treaties
- evaluation of substances for their dependence producing properties

No 3

November  
2008



Advertisement in local newspaper Santiago de Cali, Colombia, saying "Cancer is killing us. Pain is killing me because for several days I have been unable to find injectable Morphine HCl 3% in any place. Please Mr Secretary of Health, do not make us suffer any more. - Patient's daughter's name and mobile number - Friday 12 September 2008." The patient, Rima, died on 7 October 2008. She died in pain without having access to adequate doses of morphine.

## 35th ECDD

The 35th Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) previously scheduled for April 2009 has been postponed until September 2009. While progress has been made for its preparation, some Member States have requested more time for consultation on the questionnaire sent by WHO. Furthermore, the revision of the *Guidelines for the WHO review of psychoactive substances for international control* will be submitted for approval by the WHO Executive Board. [Information on the meeting](#) can be found on the controlled substances page of the WHO website. Any new information will also be posted here.

## Scope for WHO chronic pain guidelines defined

The Access to Controlled Medications Programme set treatment guidelines that cover all types of pain as its most urgent objective, which will demonstrate and help convince health-care workers and authorities that patients need to be treated adequately when in pain. In 2007, WHO started with the guideline development by defining what should be discussed and which questions should be answered in the chronic pain guidelines. Three Scoping Documents were prepared and reviewed by the WHO Guidelines Review Committee and an external panel of around 65 experts from around the world with specialties related to the issue of pain treatment. The [documents and more information](#) are on the website.

## Opioid availability on-line course

Recently, the [Pain & Policy Studies Group](#), which is the WHO Collaborating Centre for Policy and Communications in Cancer Care announced its on-line course, [Increasing Patient Access to Pain Medicines around the World: A Framework to Improve National Policies that Govern Drug Distribution](#)

This course is about the relationship between government policies that affect the medical availability of opioid analgesics and

patients who experience moderate to severe pain. Participation is free of charge. The target audience is: health-care providers, drug controllers, government administrators and palliative care advocates.

## Vienna NGO Committee calls for improved medical access to controlled medicines

The Vienna NGO Committee (VNGOC) is an organization representing international, national and local NGOs at the UN's Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Its objective is to support the work of UNODC, provide information on NGO activities and involve a wide sector of civil society in raising awareness of global drug policies.

The VNGOC organized a consensus process for the evaluation of 10 year anniversary of the UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs (UNGASS 1998), which takes place in 2008 and 2009. The [declaration and resolutions adopted by the NGOs](#) are available on the Committee's website. The declarations include support to the objective of improving access to controlled medicines by calling upon the countries "to support the efforts being undertaken by WHO, in consultation with the International Narcotics Control Board and UNODC, to ensure that all drugs classified as essential medicines are widely and readily available to medical practitioners and their patients."

## World Cancer Declaration 2008

The World Cancer Congress 2008, held 27-31 August 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland adopted the [World Cancer Declaration](#). The declaration sets out targets that should be reached by 2020, including that effective pain control measures will be available universally to all cancer patients in pain.

See also our [controlled medicines website](#)

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