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Manila, 19–21 February 2019

WHO Informal Consultation on a Framework for Scabies Control

Meeting report

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AIM	azithromycin–ivermectin mass drug administration
DALY	disability-adjusted life–year
IACS	International Alliance for the Control of Scabies
IDM	intensified disease management
IU	implementation unit
MDA	mass drug administration
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NTD	neglected tropical disease
SHIFT	Skin Health Intervention Fiji Trial

Executive summary

In 2017, the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group of the WHO Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases recommended that the department add scabies to its portfolio. The recommendation was made to respond to the high burden of scabies and its complications, particularly in areas with limited access to health care, and in the light of new public health control strategies for reducing the burden. The Group also recommended that, before large-scale activities for prevention and control were initiated, the prevalence of the disease should be mapped, research should be conducted to improve control, scabies should be added as an indication for use of ivermectin, guidelines should be developed for use of the medicine in public health, and affordable access to avermectins should be secured. Scabies has now been added as an indication for ivermectin to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, regional attempts have been initiated to map the disease burden, and, in partnership with national health ministries, studies are being conducted to provide evidence as a basis for recommendations on control. Work is under way to ensure access to medications, in the absence of adequate resources.

In order to find agreement on common strategies and to identify research priorities for a global control strategy, an informal WHO consultation was organized to discuss a framework for scabies control. The meeting took place at the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific in Manila, Philippines. The consultation resulted in recommendations for mapping and control strategies, research priorities and programmatic needs. Although an informal consultation does not have the authority to set WHO guidelines, the recommendations in this document represent the views of many experts, and a review of current data could therefore be considered a reasonable basis for a complete framework for scabies control. Once sufficient data are available, the framework could result in guidelines to be reviewed in the rigorous WHO process. The scabies control community should adapt its work as the framework evolves. This document should guide direction of resources to common priorities and ensure that common strategies are evaluated and updated as the evidence evolves.

The recommendations made during the informal consultation can be found in the text. The main recommendations are listed below.

1. Map the burden of scabies

Although the burden of scabies has been estimated in some countries, significant gaps remain in understanding the global distribution of the disease and its contribution to the burdens of impetigo, skin and soft-tissue infections, glomerulonephritis and possibly rheumatic heart disease. Two types of mapping were recommended: rapid mapping to generate approximate estimates of disease burden and, more importantly, identify areas that should be considered for mass treatment strategies; and detailed mapping of prevalence to refine the estimates, confirm conclusions reached by rapid mapping and identify sites for longitudinal impact assessment. Prevalence mapping would be based on the diagnostic criteria of

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