



Drug Management for Childhood Illness Manual

A Tool to Assess Availability and Use of Drugs and Supplies for IMCI

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The *Drug Management for Childhood Illness (DMCI) Manual* is a tool to assess the status of the drugs and medical supplies that are needed to implement the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) health promotion strategy. The IMCI strategy seeks to reduce mortality and morbidity rates for the five major causes of childhood illness—acute respiratory infection, diarrhea, measles, malaria, and malnutrition—and of common associated conditions. The *DMCI Manual* complements the strategy by helping those implementing IMCI programs address the critical roles of drug and medical supply availability and use in combating these conditions.

The *DMCI Manual* has a number of potential applications, including—

- Defining the status of the pharmaceutical sector
- Designing, planning, and evaluating interventions
- Defining budget and resource requirements
- Monitoring changes in prescribing practices and in the pharmaceutical system
- Comparing the performance of different systems and programs

The manual was developed by the Rational Pharmaceutical Management (RPM) Project of Management Sciences for Health (with program funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID]), in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the USAID-funded BASICS project. It was field-tested in Latin America (Bolivia and Ecuador) and has been applied in Zambia, Uganda, Senegal, and Guinea.

The Issues

One barrier to effective IMCI case management is that the drugs needed to treat childhood illnesses are often not available in-country. For the IMCI strategy to work, health workers and consumers must have access to a core group of drugs and supplies. Therefore, country-level preparation and implementation activities for IMCI should ensure that the drugs recommended in the guidelines are available. If the drugs and supplies are not available, a rapid assessment must be done to determine why.

Assessing the Issues

The *DMCI Manual* presents an indicator-based approach for assessing pharmaceutical management systems and programs in the public and private sectors. The assessment is specifically tailored to the needs and objectives of IMCI programs and uses retrospective and prospective data collection methodologies. To accompany the *DMCI Manual*, a *DMCI Data*

Collector's Guide, which includes a set of data collection forms and instructions for conducting the assessment, has been developed. In addition, study organizers can use a customized DMCI software program, adapted from the Epi Info program, for data entry and analysis.

How the DMCI Manual Works

The DMCI assessment gives donors, Ministry of Health authorities, and IMCI managers a comprehensive overview of drug management tailored to the needs of their IMCI program design and implementation. The *DMCI Manual* is designed to take users through the assessment process step by step. Using the concept of indicator-based assessments, the manual helps managers to identify specific strengths and weaknesses of the drug supply system for IMCI implementation in the target country.

The DMCI assessment methodology is built on two complementary studies: a drug availability study and a drug use study. Each study uses specific indicators to measure the performance of a particular aspect of the drug supply system.

The DMCI tool can provide a baseline assessment of drug availability, cost, and use in the public and private sectors. Managers can also use the tool to monitor and evaluate the status of drug management as it affects the implementation of IMCI programs. In addition, program managers can analyze drug use behavior and its cost implications using the DMCI software program.

Role of RPM Plus in DMCI Assessments

RPM Plus, the follow-on program to RPM, has applied the DMCI tool in Uganda, Zambia, Senegal, and Guinea. RPM Plus is prepared to provide short-term technical assistance to essential drugs program representatives, IMCI managers, and others working in the field as they carry out the DMCI assessment, including data collection. This assistance could include, for example, developing IMCI tracer product lists, customizing data collection instruments, training data collectors, assisting with data analysis, and formulating recommendations based on assessment findings. Depending on the scope of the assistance, RPM Plus estimates a level of effort of two to three person-months of technical assistance per country. RPM Plus has Spanish- and French-speaking staff, and the *DMCI Manual*, *DMCI Data Collector's Guide*, and the DMCI software program are available in English, French, and Spanish.

For further information, please contact—

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