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SUU Alm.del - Bilag 210
Offentligt

International Office
Rue de Lausanne 78
CP 116
1211 Geneva 21
Switzerland

Phone: +41 (0)22 8498400
Fax: +41 (0) 22 849 84 04

www.msf.org

A.18 - Hypochlorous acid (HOCl)

MSF supports the application for the inclusion of aqueous hypochlorous acid (HOCl) in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, in section 15.1 (Antiseptics) and 15.2 (Disinfectants), and section 13 (Dermatological medicines).

Hypochlorous acid is a chlorine generating disinfectant. The active chlorine released by hypochlorous acid has a broad spectrum of bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal activity and is also a wound-cleansing agent, with antiseptic and healing properties, for the treatment of a variety of skin disorders.

Hypochlorous acid is a well-studied, non-toxic, non-corrosive, easy to use compound, and a more effective and a safer alternative to other chlorine generating disinfectant agents, such as sodium dichloroisocyanurate (NaDDC).

The European Chemical Agency (ECHA) lists hypochlorous acid as a biocide product type 1 (human hygiene), product type 2 (surface disinfection), product type 3 (veterinary hygiene), type 4 (food and feed area) and type 5 (drinking water).

Hypochlorous acid has been also approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for disinfection of food-contact surfaces, for high level disinfection and sterilization of medical instruments, for topical applications, for use in drinking water and as a no-rinse food sanitizer.

In 2020, due to the need of specific guidance in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, hypochlorous acid has also been listed in the following documents:

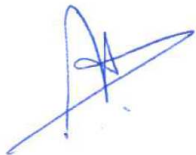
- The WHO list of coronavirus-effective biocides (Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19, WHO, 2020).
- The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) “N” list of Disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2.
- The Health Canada list of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19.
- The Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods, as a hospital grade disinfectant effective against COVID-19.

MSF would like to draw the attention of the Expert Committee to the following facts:

- Hypochlorous acid is mainly registered in high regulated countries. Its inclusion in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines will serve as a basis for National Essential Medicines lists and therefore will attract additional manufacturers, will facilitate importations, will alert manufacturers about the need for local registrations, will allow for competition between manufacturers in order to reduce price and improve accessibility, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, and will give a strong signal to manufacturers, generic producers, country programs, international donors, and health regulatory authorities.
- A stable, concentrated, long shelf-life (≥ 3 years), easy and ready-to-dilute product, must be available for settings where shipping is needed, especially in low- and middle-income countries, in order to reduce logistical constraints and increase availability and affordability.

In light of these elements, MSF urges the 23rd Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to include hypochlorous acid in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

For Médecins Sans Frontières



Myriam Henkens, MD, MPH
International Medical Coordinator