



Digestive Diseases  
Research Institute



WHO Collaborating Center  
for Research on Gastrointestinal Cancers



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### Dear WHO Expert Committee

We are writing in strong support for the inclusion of fixed dose combination therapy (also known as the “polypill”) for secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease in the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Model List of Essential Medicines.

In September 2011, the United Nations adopted a historic declaration to achieve a 25% relative reduction in premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 2025. Reducing premature cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality will be key to achieve this overall goal as it represents almost half of NCDs premature deaths.

Premature mortality (<70) constitute about 55% annual mortality in our country Iran, about 50% of this is due to cardiovascular (CV) death. The estimated YLL due to premature CVD death will be much more than 1 million YLLs. Several studies has showp that the adherence for aspirin, statin and hypertensive medications in patient who already had a CV events in Iran is in the range of 45-50%. The main reasons for very low adherence for secondary prevention of CV diseases are forgetfulness, pill burden, Concern about medication side effects, Poor provider-patient relationship and cost.

Fixed dose combination therapy has been proposed for more than a decade as a potential solution to simplify treatment, and there is now substantial evidence to include fixed dose combination for secondary prevention in the WHO List of Essential Medicines.

This strategy will be particularly relevant to patients in our country where access and affordability to cost-effective secondary prevention is very important to reduce premature mortality. A meta-analysis and pilot phase study in Iran revealed that we will be able to reduce 50% of the CVD mortality and an interim analysis of our large scale pragmatic randomized controlled trial (PolyIran) is very promising<sup>1-3</sup>.

Widespread use of a polypill will be vital as part of the strategy to achieve the UN target to reduce premature NCDs mortality by 25% in 2025. We therefore strongly endorse the inclusion of the polypill as part of the Essential medicines list of the WHO.

Sincerely Yours,

R. Malekzadeh M.D.



### References

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