


MEMORANDUM

From: Director, MSD **To:** Secretary, Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines **Date:** 12 January 2007

Our ref: EML 2007 **Attention:** Dr S. Hill

Your ref: E/19/81/15 **Through:**

Originator: J.M. Bertolote  **Subject:** APPLICATION FOR FLUOXETINE HYDROCHLORIDE TO BE ADDED TO THE WHO MODEL LIST OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES

Based on both the application prepared by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health, Section on Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology, University of Verona, and our own experience, we have the following comments to offer on the abovementioned subject:

1. There is no clear evidence that fluoxetine, as an anti-depressant, has a greater efficacy than tricyclic anti-depressants.
2. There is some consistent evidence that fluoxetine has less side effects than tricyclics, hence contributing to an increase in adherence to treatment. This superiority is in the range of about 10%.
3. In spite of fluoxetine having come off patent, the cost in Europe (only region from where there is reliable evidence) of the treatment with fluoxetine is 3 to 10 times higher than the treatment with tricyclics, depending on the severity of the depression (the higher the severity, the higher the difference in costs).

In conclusion, there seems to be no justification for the inclusion of fluoxetine as another anti-depressant in the WHO EDL.


Dr B. Saraceno

Received in PAR 15 JAN 2007			
To	Intis	Date	Away
CO	Co	15/1	15/1
SH	SH	15/1	15/1
Action needed:			
Action taken:			