



Research seminar: The World Health Organization (WHO) and Model Lists of Essential Medicine

4 November 2025, 13:30 to 16:15

This seminar is hosted by the Center for Evidence-Based Psychiatry and the Research Unit for Clinical Psychopharmacology, both part of the Psychiatry Department in Region Zealand.

The World Health Organization (WHO) updates its Model Lists of Essential Medicines (EML) every two years through its Expert Committee. The first EML appeared in 1977, followed by the children's list (EMLc) in 2007. The latest editions, from September 5th 2025, are the 24th EML and 10th EMLc. Essential medicines address priority healthcare needs, must be reliably available in appropriate forms and quality, and be affordable. Selection is based on public health relevance, therapeutic value, cost-effectiveness, clinical suitability, and strong evidence of safety and efficacy.

As the EML's 50th anniversary approaches in 2027, this meeting reviews progress and challenges in essential medicines for mental health. Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders remain a major burden, yet access to effective, affordable medicines is still inadequate. The discussion will focus on how WHO policies and Model Lists can better support mental health systems—ensuring key psychotropic medicines are prioritized and available within universal health coverage. Dr. Maija Bruun Haastrup will give a presentation on ADHD medication consumption patterns in Region Zealand. Dr. Lorenzo Moja, MD, DrPH, PhD, from the WHO Secretariat, will outline the evolution of psychiatric medicines in the Essential Medicines List (EML), tracing key milestones in the inclusion and classification of antipsychotics, antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and anxiolytics. He will review recent updates, highlight changes in treatment recommendations, and discuss implications for global health policy, access, and equity. This session provides a rare insight into psychiatry, essential medicines policy, and evidence-based decision-making at the global level. Associate Professor Lourdes Cantarero Arevalo, head of the WHO Collaborating Center for Research and Training in the Patient Perspective on Medicines Use, will also give a presentation. In addition, Associate Professor Rikke Thaarup Wesselhøft will speak about the pharmacological treatment of children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders in Scandinavian countries.

The seminar is free of charge.

Register your participation no later than October 24th to Louise Holm Nielsen at loniels@regionsjaelland.dk. Seats are limited and will be allocated in the order of registration.

Chair: Professor Ole Jakob Storebø

Venue: Mødelokale 1 + 2, Vestermarksvej 16, SUH Roskilde/ Slagelse

PROGRAM

13:30 – 13:40 Short general introduction by Prof. Gesche Jurgens

13:40 – 13:55 What stands out in the ADHD medication consumption pattern in Region Zealand? By Dr. Maija Bruun Haastrup, MD, Specialist in Clinical Pharmacology

13:55 – 14:25 Essential Medicines and Psychiatry: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective by Dr. Lorenzo Moja

14:25 – 14:40 The Role of Patients (and Citizens) in Selecting Essential Medicines for Psychiatric Conditions: the case of long-acting Injectable antipsychotics by Associate Prof. Lourdes Cantarero Arevalo

14:40 – 15:00 Break

15:00 – 15:30 Utilization of psychotropic medication among children and adolescents in the Scandinavian countries by Associate Prof. Rikke Thaarup Wesselhøft.

15:30 – 16:00 Discussion

16:00 – 16:15 Closing comment by Prof. Ole Jakob Storebø