

Essential medicines

- **The concept of essential medicines**

A limited range of carefully selected essential medicines leads to better health care, better drug management, and lower costs

- **Definition of essential medicines**

Essential medicines are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population

(Report to WHO Executive Board, January 2002)



Full description of essential drugs (Expert Committee Report, April 2002)

Selection criteria: disease prevalence, evidence on efficacy and safety, and comparative cost-effectiveness

Purpose: intended to be available within the context of functioning health systems at all times,

- in adequate amounts,
- in the appropriate dosage forms,
- with assured quality, and at a price the individual and the community can afford.

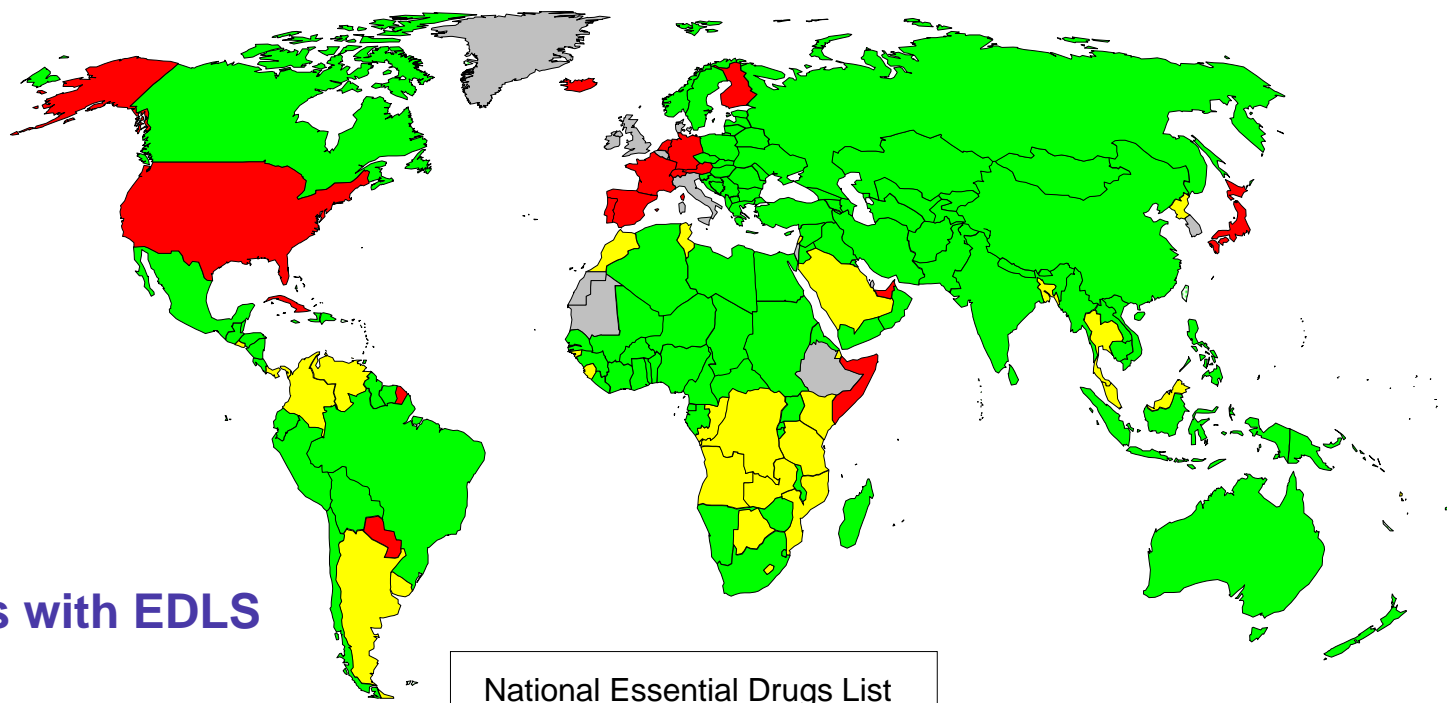
Implementation: intended to be flexible and adaptable to many different situations; exactly which medicines are regarded as essential remains a national responsibility.

The WHO Model List of Essential Medicines is a model product, model process and public health tool Initiated in 1987

- Independent Membership of the Committee, careful consideration of conflict of interest
- Transparent process, standard application, web review
- Link to evidence-based clinical guidelines
- Systematic review of comparative efficacy, safety, cost-effectiveness and public health relevance
- Rapid dissemination, electronic access
- Regular review



Countries with a national list of essential medicines



156 countries with EDLS

National Essential Drugs List

- < 5 years (127)
- > 5 years (29)
- No NEDL (19)
- Unknown (16)