

NOMCoL Background

Background

In 2009, based on the success of the External Quality Control Programs (EQCP) network administered by PAHO, which includes Official Medicines Control Laboratories (OMCLs) in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Network of Official Medicines Control Laboratories – Africa (NOMCoL Africa) was formed. Initially, NOMCoL Africa consisted of the OMCL's from five countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, and Senegal. Because of the success and growing value of the network, the network has been expanded to now include 13 countries from the African continent. The success of NOMCoL Africa prompted the advent of two additional NOMCoLs – Middle East and North Africa in 2010 and Asia Pacific in 2013.

Mission

The NOMCOLs seek to protect public health in their respective regions by strengthening the capacity of the official medicines control laboratories and promoting scientific and technical collaboration. As such the networks must guarantee the safety of patients, within the general framework of the pharmaceutical legislation of each member country, so that the results given by the laboratories concerned can, if necessary, be used to enforce the law and to take legal action.

Objectives of NOMCoL Networks

- Enhance and strengthen the performance and technical skills of laboratory staff
- Promote information exchange on work activities to optimize the technical expertise, laboratory resources among members
- Promote implementation of Good Laboratory and Documentation Practices

Activities

• Annual Meeting

An annual meeting is held to discuss current topics of interest, develop annual work plans, facilitate annual work plan activities and welcome new members

• Inter-laboratory Comparison Testing

In order to continuously strengthen the performance and technical skills of OMCL staff, an annual inter-laboratory comparison testing activity is held. Member countries select a particular product to analyze based on epidemiological data, current product quality issues, and potential monograph issues. Both a sample and its relevant reference standard are sent to the member countries that test the sample according to its relevant pharmacopeial monograph.

A complete report is then provided to the U.S. Pharmacopeia's Global Health Impact Programs (GHIP), who analyzes the results and provide poignant and relevant feedback that can be used by the member countries to continuously strengthen their current practices.

• Training

Based on requests and areas of improvement identified by member countries and USP through annual meetings and inter-laboratory comparison testing, trainings are conducted. The scope of these trainings can vary greatly; addressing anything from specific analytical procedures to laboratory processes and the steps involved in obtaining either ISO 17025 accreditation or WHO prequalification.

• Regional Collaboration

A key aspect of the networks is to improve communication between member laboratories of the networks as well as strengthen south-south technical collaboration. In addition to this, we recognize that laboratories have expertise in various specific analyses. This expertise can be used to outsource analyses that a laboratory may be particularly proficient and well versed in.

Another concern being faced by regulators is the lack of information sharing amongst countries on the quality issues surrounding substandard and counterfeit medicines. NOMCOL-SSA provides a forum for this information-sharing, related particularly to the quality attributes of a product. This can provide valuable information to an OMCL to help prioritize the products they are testing.

Networks

NOMCoL Africa

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- Currently has 18 member countries – Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe



At a meeting to discuss ways to augment NOMCoL Africa with other continental initiatives, held in USP Ghana in March 2017, USP, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and West African Health Organization (WAHO) agreed to transform NOMCoL in Africa into the African Medicines Quality Forum (AMQF). AMQF represents the new vision of NOMCoL and will expand its scope to cover all countries on the continent in alignment with the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) programme and, ultimately, the proposed African Medicines Agency (AMA).

NOMCoL MENA

- Currently has 9 member countries – Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Kuwait



NOMCoL Asia Pacific

- Currently has 8 member countries – Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam

