



## FACT SHEET AUGUST 2006

### NEW WHO GUIDELINES ON ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY FOR HIV INFECTION IN ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS

All WHO fact sheets, press releases, features and other information on HIV/AIDS can be found on <http://www.who.int/hiv/toronto2006>

#### BACKGROUND

The launch of the "3 by 5" initiative by WHO and UNAIDS in December 2003 declared the HIV/AIDS treatment gap a global public health emergency, and led to unprecedented levels of political will and commitment from global partners working with national governments. This placed antiretroviral therapy (ART) scale-up and provision firmly at the forefront of the comprehensive response to HIV prevention, care and support, causing the number of people receiving ART to more than triple. By the end of 2005, WHO estimated that over 1.3 million of the 6.5 million people requiring ART in low- and middle-income countries were receiving it.

#### THE REVISED WHO GUIDELINES

Considerable new evidence and programmatic experience have been gained since the original version of the guidelines for ART for was released in 2003, with many countries using the guidelines as a resource tool to develop or revise their own national strategies. Many of the basic con-

cepts of the original version have been retained, including recommendations on when to initiate ART, first- and second-line ARV (antiretroviral) drug regimens, management of drug toxicities, drug substitutions, considerations for pregnant women, ART management of patients with specific co-infections, clinical and laboratory monitoring, regimen adherence and resistance problems.

The rapid scale-up of ART in resource-limited settings, however, has necessitated a revision of the guidelines in order to keep them up-to-date and relevant. Some of the major highlights in the revised version include information on the following:

- the use of ART in women
- patients with HIV/ TB/ viral hepatitis co-infection
- injecting drug users
- failure of second-line therapy
- future directions for improving access to care and treatment
- recommendations and choices for standard first-line regimen ARV drugs

These guidelines were revised in tandem with *Antiretroviral drugs for treating pregnant women and preventing HIV infection in infants*. A key difference in the new version is that the section on paediatric therapy is now published separately as a stand-alone document, *Antiretroviral therapy of HIV infection in infants and children in resource-limited settings*.

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These revised WHO guidelines will be useful for national and regional programme managers and policy makers, managers of nongovernmental organizations delivering HIV care services, and clinicians involved in the scaling up of comprehensive HIV care and ART in resource-limited countries.