



PRESS STATEMENT

Introduction

As the Zimbabwe College of Public Health Physicians (ZCPHP), we have noted with concern the widespread use of the medicine ivermectin, and the flourishing formal and informal markets of ivermectin. Whilst we acknowledge the current crisis characterized by the rapid increase in the number of cases as well as tragic loss of lives, we should ensure any new treatments and approaches in responding to the pandemic remain in line with the evidence base and the robust tried and tested processes for regulating drugs and protecting public health in Zimbabwe.

Our country has a well-established, tried and tested regulatory process for bringing new treatments into clinical practice and it is important in the interest of public health for these systems and processes to be upheld. Any deviations from this robust process have both immediate and long-term implications for public health and medical practice. Below is a summary of the College's position on Ivermectin and its use in Covid-19 prophylaxis and treatment.

License and safety status for Ivermectin

Ivermectin is currently only licensed for veterinary use in Zimbabwe. It is **NOT** in our national treatment guidelines for Covid-19 or in the Essential Drugs List of Zimbabwe (EDLIZ).

Evidence base

We have reviewed the current scientific evidence and international guidance on the use of Ivermectin for Covid-19 prophylaxis and treatment. Our conclusion is that whilst there are a number of studies of differing quality and relevance to this issue, there is **NO** sufficient evidence to support its use.

Recommendations

Regulatory authorities and professional bodies

We therefore appeal to the regulatory authorities (Ministry of Health and Child Care, Medical and Dental Practitioners Council, Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe, and Pharmacist Council of Zimbabwe) to immediately act in the interest of public safety and stop forthwith the prescription and use of ivermectin for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19.



ZCPHP

ZIMBABWE COLLEGE

Of Public Health Physicians

The ZCPHP continues to closely appraise emerging evidence on treatments for Covid 19 and will immediately advocate for recommendation for medicines that are found to be effective and safe.

We recommend the urgent development (if not already in place) of a framework on research specifically targeted at developing and coordinating appropriate research for any new treatments and regimes purported to be preventative or curative for Covid-19. This framework can take advantage of existing arrangements, capacity and capability for research and development that exists across different agencies and sectors. This should also include cross border collaborations to ensure we learn from research being carried out in other countries (especially those with a similar context as Zimbabwe).

Medical practitioners

We call upon medical practitioners to discharge their duties responsibly and in line with the code of conduct and professional expectations by:

- Not prescribing medicines that are not licensed for Covid-19
- Not carrying out small trials in their settings outside of the robust and systematic processes that already exist
- Not bow to public pressure and requests for none-licensed medicines
- Not further propagate information on the use of non-licensed medicines or treatment combinations that do not have an evidence base.

For the Public

We urge the general public to comply with the proven public health measures for the prevention of Covid-19 transmission. Do not allow or demand the use of unregistered medicines such as ivermectin.

Dr. Pamela Magande

ZCPHP President

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