

# Assessing the Nature, Extent and Impact of Regulation of Medicines Promotion

## Rational Use of Medicines and Medicines Promotion

When medicines are used rationally, patients receive appropriate treatment, in doses that meet their individual requirements, for an adequate period of time. We can add to this that rational use of appropriate medicines reflects the lowest cost both to the patient and/or their community. However, it is estimated that globally “half of all medicines are prescribed, dispensed or sold inappropriately, and half of all patients fail to take them correctly. Overuse, underuse or misuse of medicines results in wastage of scarce resources and widespread health hazards.” Since medicines can account for between one quarter to two thirds of national health spending in developing countries, the potential for poor health outcomes and resource wastage is acute. For example, in developing countries, out-of-pocket spending on medicines can be an enormous burden on households, the majority of which may already be struggling to meet basic needs. Add to this the problem of anti-microbial resistance, whereby antibiotics are no longer effective for treating the infections for which they were originally developed. Irrational overprescribing has made a significant contribution to this devastating global problem.

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