Figure 2.1: Timeline of milestones in development of essential medicines and health systems concepts

A more comprehensive timeline with full references is available in the Web Annex www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/resources/flagshipreports/en/

LEGEND
Essential medicine policies milestones
Health systems strengthening milestones

1975
WHA Resolution 28.66 calls on WHO to assist Member States to select and procure essential drugs of good quality and at a reasonable cost.

1977
WHO publishes first EML of 205 items.

1978
Alma Ata identifies the “provision of essential drugs as one of eight key components of PHC”.

The Alma Ata Declaration articulates the concept of Primary Health Care.

1981
WHA Resolution 37.33 requests meeting of experts on rational use of medicines (the Nairobi conference).

1984
WHO launches Action Programme on Essential Drugs.
Management Sciences for Health publishes first version of “Managing Drug Supply”.

1985
Implementation of the Bamako Initiative leads to the establishment of revolving drug funds, specifically collecting user fees for medicines.

1987
The Nairobi conference results in the WHO Revised Drug Strategy, which puts the “emphasis beyond selection (and onto) procurement, distribution, rational use, and quality assurance for the public sector.”

1989
The International Network for Rational Use of Drugs (INRUD) is established “to design, test, and disseminate effective strategies to improve the way drugs are prescribed, dispensed, and used, with a particular emphasis on resource-poor countries”.

1990s
Many LMICs start implementing user fees for health care, supported by international development agencies.

WHO begins the development of medicines indicators and regular surveys in Members States.

UN Millennium Declaration creates eight Millennium Development Goals related to poverty, health and education, with the goal of achieving targets by 2015. Health-related MDGs are MDG 4 (child mortality), MDG 5 (maternal health), MDG 6 (HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) and MDG 8 (partnerships for development).

The HIV/AIDS crisis attracts greater political attention to the public health implications of the TRIPS agreement; this is formally discussed by the Group of 8 (G8), and at the International AIDS Conference in Durban.

Report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health recommends scaling-up “the resources currently spent in the health sector by poor countries and donors alike and tackling the non-financial obstacles that have limited the capacity of poor countries to deliver health services”.

WHO introduces prequalification service to assess quality, safety and efficacy of medicines for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The Global Drug Facility for TB medicines is created.

The World Trade Organization’s Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement sets minimum 20-year patent protection for technology products, including medicines.

Pharmaceutical companies sue the government of South Africa over policies that aim to improve access to low-cost HIV medicines.

Medicines are identified in the World Health Report as a key input for functioning health systems.

MDG 8 (Partnerships for development) specifically targets access to medicines “in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, [providing] access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries”.

The World Development Report 1993 includes a section on “Improving the selection, acquisition, and use of drugs”.

The World Development Report argues for investing in health as a means of accelerating economic development. The report recommends redirecting government spending “away from specialized care and toward low-cost and highly effective activities, such as immunization... and control of infectious diseases”.

The World Development Report 1993: Investing in Health includes a section on “Improving the selection, acquisition, and use of drugs”.

First ICIUM conference.

The HIV/AIDS crisis attracts greater political attention to the public health implication of the TRIPS agreement; this is formally discussed by the Group of 8 (G8), and at the International AIDS Conference in Durban.

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WHO introduces prequalification service to assess quality, safety and efficacy of medicines for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

The Global Drug Facility for TB medicines is created.

LEGEND

Essential medicine policies milestones

Health systems strengthening milestones

1993

1994

1997

1998

2000

2001
MEDICINES IN HEALTH SYSTEMS: ADVANCING ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY AND APPROPRIATE USE

Chapter 2: Evolving Concepts in Essential Medicines and Health Systems

LEGEND

Essential medicine policies milestones
Health systems strengthening milestones

Most global health initiatives include activities to improve medicines procurement, distribution and use.
First edition of WHO/HAI medicines price and availability survey is released.
The Global Drug facility for TB medicines is created.

Launch of major global health initiatives such as Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM), Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and others.

WHO Resolution 58.33 on Universal Health Coverage commits to developing health care financing systems so that people who need services can access them without financial hardship.

WHO publishes Everybody’s business: strengthening health systems to improve health outcomes, which states that “equitable access to essential medicine products, vaccines and technologies of assured quality, safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness, and their medical scientifically sound and cost-effective use” is one of the six health system building blocks.

The WHO’s Framework for Action in Everybody’s Business: Strengthening health systems to improve health outcomes presents six health system building blocks for functioning health systems.

The second AHPSR Flagship Report: Sound choices: enhancing capacity for evidence-informed health policy is published.

Doha declaration creates flexibilities for countries to protect public health under TRIPS agreement and “promote access to medicines for all”.

Second ICIUM conference.
ReAct, an independent global network for concerted action on antibiotic resistance, is created.

Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health publishes report with recommendations on innovative mechanisms for the creation of new medicines for diseases that “disproportionally affect” LMICs.

World Health Report 2008: Primary Health Care: Now more than ever is published.
Getting health reform right: a guide to improving performance and equity which recommends analysing a health system by looking at eight “control knobs,” is published.

The Access to Medicines Index publishes its first report – on pharmaceutical companies’ efforts to improve access to medicine in developing countries.
Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA) is launched.
The UN NCD meeting also recommends improving access and affordability of medicines for NCDs.

The Global Compact LEAD Task Force is formed.

WHO Consultative Expert Working Group (CEWG) on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination holds meetings.

Third ICIUM conference.

The Lancet Infectious Disease Commission publishes a report with policy recommendations for coordinated efforts to curb antibiotic resistance.

World Health Report 2013: Research for universal health coverage is published.

WHO Executive board resolution on access to medicines includes reference to complexity and inter-relation of system components and the need for health system research.

World Health Report 2010 highlights that three of the top 10 sources of health system inefficiency involve medicines: high medicine prices and underuse of generics; use of sub-standard and counterfeit medicines; and inappropriate and ineffective use of medicines.

IFPMA Directory of Global Health Partnerships is released.

Report of the WHO CEWG: Financing and coordination is published.

United Nations General Assembly releases Resolution on Universal Health Coverage

Second Global Symposium on Health System Research is convened.

Third Global Symposium on Health Systems Research is convened.

2011

2012

2013

2014

2010

2009

LEGEND

Essential medicine policies milestones

Health systems strengthening milestones

Third AHPSR Flagship Report: Systems thinking for health systems strengthening is published.

High Level Task Force on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems recommends “the creation of a platform to coordinate aid to health systems”.

World Health Report 2010: Health systems financing: the path to universal coverage is published.

First Global Symposium on Health System Research is convened.

IFPMA Directory of Global Health Partnerships is released.

Report of the WHO CEWG: Financing and coordination is published.

United Nations General Assembly releases Resolution on Universal Health Coverage

Second Global Symposium on Health System Research is convened.

Third Global Symposium on Health Systems Research is convened.