Artesunate + mefloquine

Section: 6. Anti-infective medicines > 6.5. Antiprotozoal medicines > 6.5.3. Antimalarial medicines > 6.5.3.1. Antimalarial medicines > For curative treatment

**Indication**
Malaria due to Plasmodium falciparum

**INN**
Artesunate + mefloquine

**Medicine type**
Biological agent

**List type**
Core

**Formulations**
Oral > Solid: 25 mg + 55 mg tablet; 100 mg + 220 mg tablet

**EML status history**
First added in 2013 (TRS 985)

**Sex**
All

**Age**
Also recommended for children

**Therapeutic alternatives**
The recommendation is for this specific medicine

**Patent information**
Patents have expired in most jurisdictions
Read more about patents.

**Wikipedia**
Artesunate + mefloquine

**DrugBank**
Artesunate, Mefloquine

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**Summary of evidence and Expert Committee recommendations**

An application for the addition of the fixed-dose combination of artesunate + mefloquine was submitted by the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), Geneva, Switzerland. Expert reviews were prepared by Dr Shalini Sri Ranganathan and Dr Eva Njenga. Artesunate (AS) and mefloquine (MQ) are well established for the treatment of malaria and are listed in the EML and EMLc, with notes advocating their use in combination therapy. The combination artesunate + mefloquine (ASMQ) is recommended by WHO as one of five fixed-dose combinations for the treatment of uncomplicated falciparum malaria. The ASMQ combination is first-line therapy for Plasmodium falciparum malaria in the national policies of some Asian and South American countries. Fixed-dose combinations of the drugs reduce the pill burden and, more importantly, eliminate the possibility of patients taking only one component of the combination or providers selling only one drug to reduce costs. The age-based unit dose packaging provided is appropriate for all age groups, which should make the dosing easier at all levels of the health care system, including in the community. Evaluations of the fixed-dose combination in clinical studies have shown similar comparative efficacy to that demonstrated with separate tablets of artesunate and mefloquine (1, 2). Reported adverse events were also comparable between the fixed-dose combination and separate tablets. There is some evidence to suggest that transmission is decreased in places where the fixed-dose combination is used (3). The current price per child and adult treatment with the ASMQ fixed-dose combination compares well with co-blister presentations or separate tablets of artesunate and mefloquine. DNDi and its partners are working towards lowering the price of the ASMQ combination in the future. ASMQ fixed-dose combination products are prequalified by WHO and the fixed-dose combination is currently registered in Brazil, India, Malaysia and Myanmar. WHO does not recommend the use of separate tablets of artesunate and mefloquine in African children because of concerns about toxicity, including vomiting. To address these concerns DNDi is sponsoring a multicentre, open label, prospective, randomized and controlled phase IV study in Burkina Faso, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania to assess the efficacy, safety and pharmacokinetics of the ASMQ fixed-dose combination versus artemether- lumefantrine in approximately 1000 children with uncomplicated P. falciparum malaria (4).