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February 17, 2016

Open Letter Re.: inclusion of rifapentine in the Global Drug Facility catalogue

Dear Isabelle,

On February 1, 2016, the Stop TB Partnership Global Drug Facility (GDF) and its procurement agent, IDA Foundation, released an Invitation to Bid for eligible suppliers to include tuberculosis (TB) medicines in the GDF catalogue (see notice posted on http://www.stoptb.org/gdf/drugsupply/procurement_notice.asp). For the first time, the Invitation to Bid includes rifapentine (150mg film coated tablets) among the eligible anti-tuberculosis medications.

The Community Research Advisors Group (CRAG) is writing to strongly encourage Sanofi to submit a bid for rifapentine by the February 29th deadline. As the community advisory body to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Tuberculosis Trials Consortium (TBTC), the CRAG remains committed to supporting efforts to expand global access to rifapentine. At the October 2015 TBTC meeting, we were encouraged to hear that country interest in rifapentine's use in treating latent TB infection is increasing, and that Sanofi is responding to this interest by taking steps to register rifapentine in multiple regions.

However, in our experience, awareness of rifapentine's potential to shorten and improve treatment of TB infection when paired with isoniazid in the 3HP regimen remains low in most settings. Furthermore, rifapentine's current lack of country registrations does not pose a barrier to its inclusion in the GDF catalogue. Adding rifapentine to the catalogue now would raise awareness of this new product and enable the GDF to proactively work with interested National TB Programs to access the drug through mechanisms such as import waivers while registration is pending.

We hope that Sanofi will recognize the Invitation to Bid as an opportunity to increase equitable access to a product that, to date, has only been made widely available in a single country.

In addition to hearing about Sanofi's plans regarding the GDF Invitation to Bid, we would appreciate an updated list of the countries in which Sanofi is actively taking steps to register rifapentine under an indication to treat TB infection, and ask that you contact mike.frick@treatmentactiongroup.org with this information.

Sincerely,
The Community Research Advisors Group