

► the rule in France: using the INN means thinking about a drug's composition; learning the therapeutic drug classes; and choosing the best drug for the individual patient (1). Once the INN has been chosen by the prescriber, the product best adapted to the patient's specific needs can be selected by the pharmacist.

Prescription using the INN should become standard good medical practice.

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Selected references from Prescrire's literature search.

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HIV-infected patients: victims of the financial crisis?

● **Taxation could be an option.**

About 33 million people around the world were living with HIV at the end of 2009 (1). Yet the fight against AIDS is increasingly under threat at the global level, because of insufficient funding.

Difficulties in mobilising funds. Since its inception, the "Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria", the world's main source of funding for access to antiretroviral drugs, has suffered from insufficient funding by donor nations. This situation is becoming worse because of the global "financial crisis" (2).

As it turned out, as of late 2010, the funding pledges obtained by the Global Fund for the period 2011-2013 were not as low as had been feared, thanks to the rapid reactions by the Global Fund as well as nongovernmental organisations active in the AIDS field (ActUp, Médecins Sans Frontières, etc.). But they still fall short of requirements (3).

Unmet needs. In 2010, over 10 million people whose condition warranted antiretroviral therapy did not have access to these drugs (4).

In addition, a growing proportion of patients need newer drugs that are not available in generic form and are therefore more expensive than older antiretrovirals (4).

In summary, while needs are increasing, the funding in the foreseeable future is at best stagnating.

The taxation solution. Against this backdrop of insufficient public funding, there has been interest in the idea of a tax on financial transactions. It was originally proposed by organisations such as Attac (Tobin tax), but is now being championed by some policy-makers, particularly in Germany and France. It should be on the agenda of the international G20 summit in 2011 (5).

Even a very small tax levied on transactions between banks involving currency or financial products would bring in tens of billions of dollars a year, part of

which could be allocated to healthcare, particularly AIDS.

Slightly less profit for some, prolonged survival for others.

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