WHO Update Column

By Adriana Velazquez Berumen

2020 is now here, I wish you all a healthy, prosperous and joyful New Year! I am very interested to continue the recurring WHO updates and communications with you in this volume of the Global Clinical Engineering Journal. The last half of 2019 proved to be very productive for the medical device team, particularly with respect to health technology management issues.

In my last update, I talked about the national reference lists of medical devices, which are used in countries as a reference to procurement, reimbursement, which includes two components:

First the WHO Essential in Vitro Diagnostic List (EDL), describes the laboratory and point of care tests and related technologies that need to be available to screen, diagnose or monitor priority diseases or health conditions. The Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on In Vitro Diagnostics (SAGE IVD) is meeting 23rd to 27th of March to review the submissions to update the WHO Model List of Essential In Vitro Diagnostics List (EDL, as well as related policies and strategies on laboratories. Updates on this work can be found here: https://www.who.int/medical_devices/diagnostics/selection_in-vitro/en/. On the 23rd of march the session will be open in webex format for those that are interested.

Secondly, with the increase of non-communicable diseases, WHO has been developing lists for priority medical devices for cardiovascular, stroke and diabetes. This work is ongoing and hope to list all that are needed from diagnostics, to treatment , rehabilitation and palliative care for the 3 levels of care, from prehospital to specialized care. This work is expected to be finalized by March 2020.

Last October, the global Clinical Engineering community celebrated Global CE Day on October 21st. With China hosting the in-person event, the celebration of clinical engineers' impact on patient outcomes hit a new level. A link to the Global CE Day video commemorating this event and the importance of the work of clinical engineers in 2019 can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=16&v=yQ1DuSlSfvQ&feature=emb_logo. Co-aligned with the Global CE Day, was the 3rd International Clinical Engineering Healthcare Technology Management Congress (ICEHTMC) held in Rome, Italy. With over 1,000 attendees from all six WHO regions, this event showcased what clinical engineers and healthcare technology managers are doing globally to support patient outcomes and typified the global exchange of ideas for the betterment of global standards and outcomes. I was very honored to be invited to share the work that is being done in WHO and to look forward to address countries needs on medical devices including their selection, management and safe use https://ced.ifmbe.org/blog/icehtmc3-presentations.html.

At the end of 2019, WHO published the Decommissioning Medical Devices book as a continuation of the WHO Medical Device Technical Series. Decommissioning is an important part of healthcare technology management in lifecycle management and safe removal and disposal is important to health

for all. The publication can be found here: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/330095/9789241517041-eng.pdf .

While 2019 was a productive year, 2020 already appears to be shaping up to be very fruitful as well. Throughout 2019, you heard me discuss a standard nomenclature and its importance for stronger harmonizing reasons on many occasions. In May of 2019, the 145th WHO Executive Board included a thorough discussion of the standard nomenclature project which can be found here: https://www.who.int/about/governance/executive-board/executive-board-145 (statements from member states is covered from 1:03 to 2:04 in video). In 2020, our work continues to focus on the standard WHO international nomenclature system and its implementation. The next steps include a concept note being published to the executive board as an update and response to the Member State comments in the coming months. Your input into the survey https://extranet.who.int/dataform/614614?newtest=Y will be most welcome. The deadline has been moved to 10th February.

On the horizon in 2020 is also the publication of the WHO technical specifications for automated non-invasive blood pressure measuring devices, Technical specifications for cervical cancer and for the procurement of the essential in vitro technologies to allow the EDL tests.

Finally, we are working on response to Coronavirus, continue with support for Ebola and many other requests from Member States. Please find technical information for Coronavirus here https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance.

As clinical engineers, you play an important role in supporting medical devices and I look forward to the continued work in 2020.

Respectfully,

Adriana

An Addendum

In October of 2019, I had the privilege of serving as a short-term technical advisor at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. While I had known previously about the WHO initiatives in the Clinical Engineering arena, particularly those interfacing with the IFMBE-CED group, I was awestruck at the shear amount of initiatives and breadth of their impact on medical devices globally that are ongoing.

In the halls of WHO headquarters, there are global experts on every healthcare specialty you can imagine. Just as in a hospital, clinical engineers work collaboratively with other groups to advance healthcare priorities globally for the betterment of health for all. In a healthcare organization, a clinical engineer works daily to understand the intent and overarching goals of the organization in support of patient access, outcomes, safety and experience. Additionally, for decades, Clinical Engineering has been talking about how the profession can cohesively bring our individual efforts in our spheres of influence to strengthen the Clinical Engineering profession, regulations and standards globally. Daily, Adriana Velazquez, the Senior Advisor for Medical Devices at the WHO, works tirelessly to bring medical devices to the forefront of global health policy and initiatives. In her role, she interfaces with professionals globally on medical device regulations, health technology assessment and health technology management. In this way, you can see that building capacity and clinical engineers in this space are essential to proper health technology management. As the professionals responsible for the longest portion of a medical device's life – commissioning, sustainment, maintenance and decommissioning- the clinical engineering community is essential to ensure safe and clinically appropriate medical devices are being used across the world to prevent and treat acute and chronic illnesses. It is further important for clinical engineers to understand not only the emerging trends in health technology management, but those in medical device regulations and health technology assessment as well.

Expanding this to the global community, one of the key ways a Clinical Engineer can understand the WHO's global health objectives is to familiarize themselves with the WHO Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG3 "Good Health and Well-Being," and the Triple Billion targets of "1 billion people enjoying better health and well-being, 1 billion people benefiting from universal health coverage and 1 billion more people better protected from health emergencies." In this way, clinical engineers can leverage the strategic framework outlined by the WHO to align priorities and efforts globally. IFMBE and its Clinical Engineering Division work tirelessly to align their work with the overarching global priorities set forth by the WHO.

As we kickoff 2020, I can't think of a more exciting time for the global ethos of Clinical Engineering. On the heels of the 3rd ICEHTMC in Rome, Italy, over 1,000 clinical engineering professionals from 6 continents got together to share information, vision and passion for building capacity in clinical engineering to improve patient safety, support access and spur innovation for medical devices and health technology management globally; clinical engineering professionals are well-positioned to use 2020 as a springboard that will bring a new depth of international standards, information sharing

and understanding of our profession to the world. Additionally, we are being led by courageous and passionate leaders in Adriana Velazquez at the WHO and Tom Judd the IFMBE CED Chair who have an in-depth understanding of the healthcare landscape and how clinical engineering plays a role in bringing healthcare to all.

So what can you do next to stay tapped into the WHO and IFMBE efforts? Check out the IFMBE CED "News and Blog" at https://ced.ifmbe.org/blog.html where Adriana posts the most up-to-date and agile information about WHO initiatives, and happenings as it relates to medical devices and health technology management. Also, ensure you visit the main WHO medical devices website at https://www.who.int/medical_devices/en/. Within this site, you will find information and resources on regulations, health technology assessment (HTA) and health technology management (HTM). Additionally, IFMBE/CED is working on several exciting projects and initiatives that will be bringing even more resources to the global clinical engineering landscape. Pertinent information on these can be found on the IFMBE CED site at https://ced.ifmbe.org/projects.html.

Cheers to a 2020 filled with advances in Clinical Engineering and health and well-being globally.

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