

Preface

Medicines are the most common health interventions, and the way medicines are dispensed, procured, and used can greatly impact on humans and society. The challenges related to medicines could include medicines compliance, medicines optimization, issues related to high cost, highly specialized medicines, and the funding and access to medicines. Solving these macro- and micro-level issues could improve patient health outcomes and can enhance quality of life.

Pharmaceutical policy deals with many of the issues mentioned above, and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all countries formulate and implement a national pharmaceutical policy. Medicines account for a large share of the health budgets in countries with developing health systems and hence are an integral part of health policy of a country.

In the last 30 years, the successful implementation of pharmaceutical policies has resulted in increasing availability, affordability, and in improving quality use of medicines. However, still challenges lay ahead with increasing aging population, emergence of resistance microbes, development of new expensive medicines, access and funding of high cost medicines, and ethical and legal challenges in providing equitable access to medicines. These challenges are also coupled with fast pace changes in healthcare, technology, and automation.

This book provides an up-to-date account and synthesis of pharmaceutical policy across a spectrum of low-income, middle-income, and high-income countries. Many of these issues are common among countries and perhaps pose variety of challenges. Understanding and documenting these challenges is the key and first vital step towards achieving the goal of “health for all”.

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