

APPENDIX D

Should Traditional Healers Be Encouraged To Use Western Eye Medicines?

Encouraging traditional healers to use Western eye medicines could be problematic and consideration of the following is required. Consider the following before making a decision.

- If distribution is encouraged, can the programme sustain long-term distribution of Western eye medicines? Is cost recovery a realistic option and does cost recovery fit within the practice of traditional medicine?
- Does the national drug policy allow for or restrict distribution of medicines to traditional healers? Are there any legal issues involved?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure the proper use of Western medicines by traditional healers? Combination of traditional and Western eye medication must be avoided. Will storage facilities be adequate and what methods can be put in place to avoid the use of outdated drugs?
- What training and supervision is necessary to ensure that Western eye medicines are used appropriately; can supervision be maintained?
- Are there ethical considerations that must be considered?
- In some places traditional healers are already using Western medicines. This practice is likely to continue, and will even expand.