



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

18 January 2022

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 2022 - 0015

FOR: ALL CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT, NATIONAL DRUG POLICY COMPLIANCE OFFICES, LEAGUES OF CITIES, PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES, PROFESSIONAL HEALTH SOCIETIES, DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS AND REGIONAL OFFICES, BARMM MINISTER OF HEALTH, CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS AND SANITARIA, AND OTHER CONCERNED

SUBJECT: Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC) Recommendation to include Sambong 250mg Tablet in the Philippine National Formulary

By virtue of Republic Act 11223, otherwise known as the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act, health technology assessment (HTA) shall be institutionalized as a fair and transparent priority-setting mechanism to provide financing and coverage recommendations on health technologies to be funded by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

On 17 November 2021, the Health Technology Assessment Unit (HTAU) started accepting applications for minor inclusion. Minor inclusions are applicable for drugs that are currently listed in the PNF, but are being applied for additional strength, immediate packaging, and net content.

As such, please be informed that the Secretary of Health has approved the HTAC recommendation for minor inclusion of Sambong 250mg tablet for anti-urolithiasis in the PNF on the basis of the following:

Current PNF Listing	Proposed PNF Listing following the Minor Inclusion
Sambong, 500mg tablet	Sambong, 500mg tablet Sambong, 250mg tablet

- The systematic review of Tolosa et al., 2020 which included four (4) studies with high risk of bias concluded that *sambong* tablet remains to be effective in treating patients with urolithiasis by radiographic evidence of a decrease in size and/or number of stones; and, the passage of stone/s and/or disappearance or reduction of signs and symptoms. There were no serious adverse events related to the use of this product and it is effective in treating patients with urolithiasis by radiographic evidence.
- According to clinician experts and submitted references by the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC), the dosing regimen needed for the use of sambong as anti-urolithiasis for the adult and pediatric (7-12 years old) populations is 40 mg/kg/day in 3 divided doses for 2 weeks and to be decreased to 20 mg/kg/day for the following weeks until complete expulsion of stones (*Reference: PNF 8th edition, National Kidney Transplant Institute*). The duration of treatment for sambong is up to 6 weeks (*Reference: UP NIRPROMP [Phase III open trial]*).

The average dosing regimens for the adult and pediatric populations (7-12 years old) of the said herbal product are shown below:

- For the adult population (60 kg patient): 2,400 mg/day in 3 divided doses for 14 days, then 1,200 mg/day in 2-3 divided doses for the next 28 days.
- For the pediatric population [7-12 years old] (30 kg patient): 1,200 mg/day in 3 divided doses for 14 days, then 600 mg/day in 2-3 divided doses for the next 28 days

Hence, either 250 mg or 500 mg form of the drug can be used for the said indication.

- Pediatric patients and patients with urinary stones less than 5mm will require a lower dose preparation of sambong tablets for more accurate dosing and as a cheaper alternative to surgical intervention. Specifically, the lower dose of sambong tablet (250mg) will be more advantageous in the latter part of the dosing regimen (i.e., at week 3 onwards) wherein the patient will transition to 600 mg/day in 2-3 divided doses. This would require 3 tablets of sambong 250 mg per day (1 tablet each to be taken in the morning, noon and night) or equivalent to 750 mg per day which is still within the recommended daily dose of 20-25 mg/kg/day. On the other hand, using the 500 mg tablet will require 2 tablets per day (1 tablet in the morning and at noon) since the tablet is not scored. This is equivalent to 1,000 mg per day or 33.33 mg/kg/day which exceeds the recommended daily dose of 20-25 mg/kg/day.
- Considering the total costs incurred for the treatment course per patient when using the sambong 250 mg tablet whether, for the average adult (60-kg patient) or pediatric population (30-kg patient), there are cost savings as compared to using the 500 mg tablet as specified below:
 - Adult population (60-kg patient): Php 304.50 saved per patient when using the 250 mg tablet versus the 500 mg tablet
 - Pediatric population (30-kg patient): Php 237.30 saved per patient when using the 250 mg tablet versus the 500 mg tablet

The lower cost is mainly due to the lower unit cost of the sambong 250 mg tablet (Php 1.80) which is 66% (Php 3.45) cheaper than sambong 500 mg tablet (Php 5.25).

For more details, you may refer to the HTA Philippines website
https://bit.ly/MinorInclusion_Sambong250mgTablet

For your information and guidance.

By Authority of the Secretary of Health:



Digitally signed by Mercado-
Grande Charade Ballucanag
Date: 2022.01.20 09:30:08
+08'00'

ATTY. CHARADE MERCADO-GRANDE
Undersecretary of Health
Health Regulation Team