

ATC Classification System for Medicines.

Local Use and Global Perspective

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- **ATC Anatomical Therapeutical Chemical**
- **ATC is a hierarchical and coded 5-level system, where the fifth level is the chemical substance.**
- **ATC is developed and maintained by the WHO Collaborating Centre of Drug Statistics Methodology, Norway. www.whooc.no**
- **ATC is recommended for global use by the World Health Organisation, WHO.**
- **ATC is used to classify and organise the WHO Essential Drug List.**
- **ATC is used at different levels in more than 80 countries.**

	LOCAL USE ELVERUM NORWAY	INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
Formularies and drug lists.	All formularies have a section where the medicines are listed according to ATC	Such tasks are nearly impossible if the nations only have the alphabet in common to classify medicines by.
Storage	The medicine stock at our hospital pharmacy is organised according to the third level of ATC.	
Search	Searches can be made for medicines that are synonymous (the same) or similar (e.g. antihistamines)	
Statistics	All medicine consumption statistics are organised according to ATC, or refer to ATC	

Paralgin Forte ® (Norwegian product name)
fixed dose combination of paracetamol and codeine.

IF THE DRUG LIST IS MADE ALPHABETICALLY, UNDER WHICH LETTER SHOULD IT APPEAR?

- A (Acetaminophen)? In Europe this substance is called Paracetamol
- C (Codeine)? In Italian, Norwegian, Hungarian etc they spell it with K.
- C (Co-Codamol)? UK has their own 'generic' names for combination of two active substances.
- K (Kodein)? In most but not all countries Codeine is spelled with C.
- P (Paracetamol)? In US this substance is called Acetaminophen.
- P (Paralgin Forte)? This product has different brand names in different countries.

None of these list positions indicate that this is an analgesic (painkiller).

ATC classification of Paralgin Forte ®

N02AA59	Codeine, combinations
N02AA	Natural opium alkaloids
N02A	Opioids
N02	Analgesics
N	Nervous system

United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia 1994.

36 different nations participated.

Very few of the nations used the same (or any) classification system for medicines.

One central supply store for medicines in Zagreb, supposed to serve all the participating nations.

How would you have set up the drug list?

No standard can become global if it is not used by the most 'central' countries.

None of the countries that ignore ATC have plans for global use of their own national classification system.

ATC is the only existing classification system for medicines with potential for global use.