Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee
Outcome Statement 28 - 29 September 2023

The Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) held its 109th meeting on the 28 – 29 September 2023.

DUSC has a national focus of excellence in collecting, analysing and interpreting data on the utilisation of medicines in Australia for use by the PBAC. Review of the utilisation of medicines is an essential management tool in facilitating the objectives of the National Medicines Policy.

The PBAC is also committed to understanding consumer perspectives and integrating them into consideration of medicines and vaccines. Consumers are able to provide their views about medicine utilisation reviews to the PBAC via a web interface.

Submissions to the PBAC

DUSC noted that five category 1, 14 category 2, and seven standard re-entry and four early re-entry submissions had been received for the November 2023 meeting of PBAC. DUSC provided detailed advice to the PBAC on projected usage and financial cost for the submissions where there was high cost, uncertain utilisation, first medicine in class or quality use of medicines concerns. The agenda for the November 2023 PBAC meeting can be found on the PBS website.

Utilisation of PBS Listed Medicines

DUSC regularly examines utilisation of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) items when there is at least 24 months of prescription data available and where DUSC or the PBAC has highlighted items of interest. When an analysis of utilisation is to be undertaken sponsors are notified and provided with a copy of the report and an opportunity to comment prior to the DUSC meeting. Reviews to be considered by the PBAC are also published in the PBAC meeting agenda. All reports, Sponsor comments and DUSC assessment of the reports are subsequently provided to the PBAC.

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of the following PBS medicines in September 2023:

Dupilumab for severe atopic dermatitis

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of dupilumab for severe atopic dermatitis. In 2022, 104,967 prescriptions were supplied to 12,523 patients, and prescriptions supplied for the treatment of the whole body accounted for 82% of these. The age group with the highest proportion of initiating patients was the 20 to 24 year old group. The proportion of males was higher than females in every age group, except in the 45 – 54 year range. Of the prescriptions supplied since PBS listing, 79% were prescribed by Dermatology specialist prescribers and 8% were prescribed by Immunology and Allergy specialist prescribers.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC for consideration.

Venetoclax for first-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia or small lymphocytic lymphoma

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of venetoclax for first-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia or small lymphocytic lymphoma (CLL/SLL) since it was listed on the PBS on 1 December 2020. The uptake of venetoclax in combination with obinutuzumab for first-line treatment of CLL/SLL differed over the first two years of listing than that predicted. The overall use of second-line therapies for CLL/SLL appears to have remained stable since the listing of venetoclax for first-line therapy. However, there appears to be a shift away from the use of ibrutinib towards venetoclax (as either monotherapy or in combination with rituximab) and to a lesser extent acalabrutinib for second-line therapy.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC for consideration.

Apremilast for severe plaque psoriasis

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of apremilast for severe plaque psoriasis. In 2022, 4,908 patients were supplied 25,248 apremilast prescriptions. In 2021, 3,312 patients were supplied 14,311 apremilast prescriptions. The chronic plaque psoriasis market has grown over time, particularly due to the availability of biologic therapies. Since PBS listing, a small proportion of patients who were treated with apremilast switched to biologic therapies.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC for consideration.

Lisdexamfetamine extension and ADHD market

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of the medicines used in the management of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This includes a predicted versus actual analysis of the first 24 months of R/PBS listing of lisdexamfetamine extended use, to allow use in adults with ADHD persisting from childhood, even if diagnosed after 18 years of age. Lisdexamfetamine was first R/PBS-listed for this indication on 1 February 2021. The rate of growth of prescriptions and patients across all age groups and genders being treated with R/PBS medicines for ADHD has risen.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC for consideration.

Upcoming Utilisation Analysis of PBS Listed Medicines

Utilisation of the following medicines was selected for consideration at future DUSC meetings.

Analysis of single or multiple medicines in a treatment area

- Dupilumab for severe asthma.
- Nivolumab with ipilimumab for mesothelioma.
- Progesterone for the prevention of pre-term birth.
- Romosozumab for osteoporosis (incl. overall market analysis).

An outcome statement will be available following each meeting of DUSC. For further information, please contact the DUSC Secretariat at DUSC@health.gov.au.

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Chair
Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee