



Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee Outcome Statement 3 February – 4 February 2022

The Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) held its 104th meeting on the 3 February – 4 February 2022.

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 four category 1, 26 category 2, eight standard re-entry submissions and one early re-entry submissions had been received for the March 2022 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 March 2022 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, 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 February 2022:

Avelumab for Merkel cell carcinoma

DUSC reviewed the use of avelumab for the treatment of Merkel cell carcinoma, a rare form of skin cancer. In the first three years of listing there were 182, 235 and 244 prevalent patients per year since May 2019 to the data cut-off to 30 November 2021. Since listing, avelumab has had a steady increase in utilisation with up to 20 newly initiating patients per month and a prevalent patient population that does not appear to have plateaued. The number of males undergoing treatment with avelumab was over three times greater than females in 2020 with the median age in females being 79 years and 77 years in males.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC.

Review of Breast Cancer Listings

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of medicines for locally advanced and metastatic breast cancer. This included an analysis of palbociclib in the first 24 months of its listing. The utilisation of palbociclib had been greater than predicted. The number of patients supplied palbociclib was 1,540 in Year 1 and 2,261 in Year 2. Of all breast cancer listings, palbociclib had the highest PBS

expenditure by 2021 Q3 based on the published list price. As at 2021 Q3, there were around 93,000 patients supplied a PBS listing for breast cancer. The number of initiating patients on breast cancer listings has remained relatively stable at around 7,500 patients per quarter since 2019 Q3. Letrozole, anastrozole and tamoxifen had the highest utilisation to treat hormone receptor positive breast cancer, the most common subtype of breast cancers. Government expenditure on hormone modulating breast cancer treatments, including letrozole, anastrozole, tamoxifen, exemestane and fulvestrant, had significantly reduced over time due to several price reductions that had been applied to these listings.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC.

Review of medicines for relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis

DUSC reviewed PBS listed medicines for relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS). In 2019, 179,907 RRMS prescriptions were supplied to 22,153 patients. In 2020, 177,884 RRMS prescriptions were supplied to 22,714 patients. Oral RRMS medicines were the most supplied form of therapy. Additionally, DUSC reviewed cladribine for RRMS. In 2019, 1,130 patients were supplied 3,295 cladribine prescriptions. In 2020, 1,407 patients were supplied 4,417 cladribine prescriptions. Utilisation of cladribine had not yet stabilised.

DUSC requested that the report be provided to the PBAC.

Upcoming Utilisation Analysis of PBS Listed Medicines

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

Predicted versus Actual Utilisation Analysis

- Teduglutide for Type III (chronic) intestinal failure associated with short bowel syndrome.

Analysis of single or multiple medicines in a treatment area

- Proton pump inhibitors used in the management of gastrointestinal acid related disorders.

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