



Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee Outcome Statement 7-8 June 2012

The Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) held its 75th meeting on 7-8 June 2012.

DUSC is 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.

Submissions to the PBAC

DUSC noted that 18 major submissions had been received for the July 2012 meeting of PBAC. DUSC provided detailed advice to the PBAC on projected usage and financial cost for major submissions where there is high cost, uncertain utilisation, first medicine in class or quality use of medicines concerns. The agenda for the July 2012 PBAC meeting can be found at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PBAC-Meeting-Agenda-july-2012.

Reviews of PBS listed medicines

DUSC regularly reviews PBS items when there is at least 12 months of prescription data available and where DUSC and/or the PBAC has highlighted items of interest for review. When a review is to be undertaken sponsors are notified, provided with a copy of the review and an opportunity to comment prior to the DUSC meeting.

Full restrictions for PBS listed medicines are available in the PBS Schedule (www.pbs.gov.au)

DUSC reviewed the utilisation of the following PBS medicines/groups of medicines in June 2012:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Review

DUSC noted a small but steady increase in utilisation of PBS listed medicines for ADHD. DUSC requested a more comprehensive analysis be conducted to account for the higher proportion of children prescribed these medicines and the lower doses used in this population. The analysis will allow DUSC to better understand utilisation according to age and patient State. A revised report will be considered by DUSC at the October 2012 meeting.

Hepatitis C Review

At the request of the PBAC, DUSC reviewed utilisation of currently listed PBS medicines for treatment of hepatitis C to inform the clinical place of new treatments. DUSC noted that the number of patients treated has increased, particularly since removal of the requirement of liver biopsy from the PBS restriction in 2006. In recent months, there has been a decrease in use of PBS subsidised treatments possibly due to patients awaiting availability of new treatments.

Rituximab Review

At the request of the PBAC, DUSC reviewed the utilisation of rituximab for the treatment of low grade and follicular lymphoma. DUSC considered a proportion of current use is in maintenance therapy and some patients are treated for longer durations than was anticipated when this medicine was recommended for listing. DUSC referred the report to the PBAC.

Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee

Outcome Statement 7-8 June 2012

Statins Review

DUSC provided advice to the PBAC on the Statins Review. The statins review is in response to a request made in the Senate in November 2010 to seek advice from the PBAC on any new evidence whether or not two medicines, atorvastatin and rosuvastatin, should be included in the existing statins therapeutic group which included simvastatin and pravastatin.

Upcoming reviews of PBS listed medicines

The following medicines and therapeutic areas have been selected by DUSC for review at future DUSC meetings.

Epoetin Lambda

DUSC requested a review of the first 12 months use of epoetin lambda for the treatment of anaemia due to renal disease. DUSC requested that the review include all PBS listed erythropoiesis-stimulating agents.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and other therapies for smoking cessation.

DUSC noted that NRT patches have been PBS listed for 12 months and requested a review of their use in the context of all therapies for smoking cessation.

Type 2 Diabetes

DUSC requested a review of utilisation of type 2 diabetes (T2D) medicines as there have been a number of changes including new medicines being listed on the PBS and safety concerns have arisen for some medicines. DUSC also noted that the PBS restrictions have become complex over time.

The review will examine the utilisation of medicines for T2D, including the sequence of therapies and agents administered concomitantly, and compare the use with PBS restrictions.

Osteoporosis

DUSC requested a review of utilisation of all medicines for the treatment of osteoporosis as there has been a number of new medicines listed and restriction changes.

Testosterone

DUSC requested a review of testosterone utilisation as a recently published paper highlighted an increase in PBS-subsidised testosterone prescribing (Med J Aust 2012; 196 (10): 642-645).

Other matters

DUSC was provided with updates on the following initiatives and programs:

- Post-marketing surveillance reviews, including the review of anti-dementia medicines (www.pbs.gov.au/info/reviews/anti-dementia-drugs).
- National Prescribing Service *MedicineInsight* Program, a post marketing surveillance measure announced in the 2011-12 Federal Budget which aims to fill existing gaps in data collection on use of medicines.
- *Supply and PBS claiming from a medication chart in residential aged care facilities.*

The Chair noted that Dr Helen Toyne and Ms Karen Peachey will not be continuing on DUSC beyond the current term and thanked them for their valuable contributions to the work of DUSC.

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

Professor David Le Couteur, Chair, Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee.