

**MARCH 2021 PBAC MEETING – CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE
DRUG UTILISATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

PBAC CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE DRUG UTILISATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The PBAC noted utilisation reports with associated stakeholder responses from the February 2021 Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) meeting, which were provided in Items 10.05 and 10.06 of the PBAC Agenda. DUSC minutes relating to these items were provided to the PBAC. The outcomes of the DUSC consideration of these items are available in the [February 2021 DUSC outcome statement](#).

Nusinersen for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)

This report considered the utilisation of nusinersen for SMA.

Outcome

PBAC noted that there was a higher initial uptake of nusinersen than expected, however it appeared that the number of patients supplied this treatment through the PBS was stabilising. PBAC considered that this may partly be due to some patients receiving treatment through participation in clinical trials.

PBAC noted consumer advice from SMA Australia that patients had moved from overseas to Australia to access nusinersen. PBAC considered that this may have contributed to some of the higher than expected use of nusinersen during the initial years of listing.

PBAC also noted advice from SMA Australia that Type 1 SMA children were surviving longer with some children now attending school.

PBAC considered that the distribution of SMA type by disease severity for patients supplied PBS nusinersen was consistent with the anticipated treated population.

Ocular lubricants for severe dry eye syndrome

This report considered the utilisation of ocular lubricants for severe dry eye syndrome.

Outcome

PBAC noted that preservative-free (PF) preparations were being supplied to patients without a prior supply of preservative-containing (PC) products. PBAC considered that this may reflect a perception among prescribers that PF products might be better tolerated than PC preparations. PBAC noted that some patients supplied a PBS listed PF ocular lubricant may have previously been treated with an over-the-counter PC product and that this prior use was not captured in the PBS data.

PBAC noted that PBS expenditure on ocular lubricants was increasing, mainly driven by a greater use of PF products, in particular sodium hyaluronate.

PBAC did not consider there was a need to change the restrictions for PF products at this time.