

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

New products provide more funded treatments for glaucoma

People suffering the progressive eye condition glaucoma now have more fully funded treatment options available, with two new products approved for funding by PHARMAC.

Travoprost (Travatan) and brinzolamide (Azopt) have been added to the Pharmaceutical Schedule to enhance the range of funded treatments available.

PHARMAC Medical Director Dr Peter Moodie says the new treatments provide greater choice to treat a condition that is a major source of disability, particularly among the elderly.

“Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness in New Zealand so it is pleasing to make a decision that can make a real difference to improve people’s quality of life,” Dr Moodie says.

“There are already fully funded alternatives to these products listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule. However, there is always a small number of patients who are unable to tolerate particular medicines so having a choice can provide advantages in some situations.”

Glaucoma is a condition usually characterised by an increase in pressure within the eye and if untreated, it can eventually lead to blindness.

Travoprost and brinzolamide are the latest medicines to be added to the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

They add to new investments made this year which include:

- pegylated interferon in combination with ribavirin (for hepatitis C)
- venlafaxine (for severe depression)
- etanercept (for childhood arthritis)
- naltrexone (for alcohol addiction)
- lopinavir with ritonavir (for HIV/AIDS)
- ezetemibe (for raised cholesterol)

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