

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

PHARMAC funds another antipsychotic drug

People with schizophrenia and related psychoses have a new funded treatment available.

PHARMAC began funding ziprasidone (Zeldox), another of the newer 'atypical' antipsychotic range of medicines, from 1 August. The capsules are funded for people who have tried other atypical antipsychotics (risperidone or quetiapine) but have stopped using these medicines because of unacceptable side effects or inadequate response.

PHARMAC Medical Director Dr Peter Moodie says the main difference between ziprasidone and some other antipsychotic drugs is that patients seem to put on less weight while taking it.

"It is a useful alternative to the other drugs currently available," he says.

Ziprasidone is the fifth atypical antipsychotic agent to be funded by PHARMAC. Currently about 40,000 patients per year take one of the other four funded atypical antipsychotics (clozapine, risperidone, quetiapine and olanzapine), at an annual cost of over \$50 million.

Dr Moodie says making the drug available had been identified as a high priority by the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee and its Mental Health Subcommittee.

"We are pleased to be able to give patients and doctors another choice."

Ends

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