

1 December 2008

Media release



Further antipsychotic treatment gets funding tick

People with schizophrenic disorders have a new funded treatment available from today.

Amisulpride (Solian) will be funded as part of an agreement with pharmaceutical company Sanofi-Aventis, that also sees injection and suppository formulations of the anti-nausea treatment prochlorperazine (Stemetil) becoming fully funded.

Amisulpride will be funded without restrictions, so it will be available as a first-line treatment option for all patients. Amisulpride is less likely to cause weight gain than some antipsychotics so could be an option where weight gain is a current or potential issue.

“This is a useful alternative to the other drugs currently available,” says PHARMAC’s Medical Director, Dr Peter Moodie.

“It expands the range of funded antipsychotics, and is associated with less of the weight-gain side effects of some other medicines. We think that people may prefer this to some of the other medicines that have been shown to cause weight gain..”

PHARMAC also recently funded two newer antipsychotics, ziprasidone (Zeldox) and aripiprazole (Abilify), both of which are also said to cause less weight gain than other antipsychotics.

Dr Moodie says PHARMAC is also funding amisulpride to help maintain a choice of older and newer antipsychotics.

“We know that schizophrenia and related psychoses can be difficult to treat and it’s important to maintain a range of treatment options. Over recent years some of the older antipsychotic treatments have been discontinued and so increasing the choice of medicines is an advantage.”

Overall, antipsychotics continue to be one of the highest expenditure groups with total spending of over \$60 million annually.

Ends

For further information contact: 021 863 342