

18 April 2013

## Proposal involving hospital use of methoxyflurane, COX-2 inhibitors and gabapentin

PHARMAC is seeking feedback on the following proposals for listings in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule, to take effect from 1 July 2013:

- List methoxyflurane for use in painful procedures;
- List etoricoxib and celecoxib for perioperative use;
- Widen access to meloxicam to include perioperative use; and
- Widen access to gabapentin to include preoperative use.

The proposals in this consultation document relate to the proposed inclusion of pharmaceuticals and/or indications (as applicable) in the Hospitals Medicines List (HML) (Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule) from 1 July 2013. They do not relate to any existing or potential funding of any of these pharmaceuticals in the community (Section B of the Pharmaceutical Schedule).

Details of the proposals are provided on the following pages.

### Feedback sought

PHARMAC welcomes feedback on this proposal. To provide feedback, please submit it in writing by **5:00 pm on Friday 3 May 2013** to:

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Senior Therapeutic Group Manager	Fax: 04 460 4995
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All feedback received before the closing date will be considered by PHARMAC's Board (or Chief Executive acting under delegated authority) prior to making a decision on this proposal.

We are not able to treat any part of your feedback as confidential unless you specifically request that we do. If you would like us to withhold any commercially sensitive, confidential proprietary, or personal information included in your submission, please clearly state this in your submission and identify the relevant sections of your submission that you would like withheld.

Feedback we receive is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and we will consider any request to have information withheld in accordance with our obligations under the OIA.

## Details of the proposals

### *Methoxyflurane*

Methoxyflurane would be listed in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 July 2013 as follows:

Chemical	Presentation
Methoxyflurane	Soln for inhalation 99.9%, 3 ml bottle

Methoxyflurane would be listed subject to the following restrictions:

Both:

- 1 Patient is undergoing a painful procedure with an expected duration of less than one hour; and
- 2 Only to be used under supervision by a medical practitioner or nurse who is trained in the use of methoxyflurane.

### *COX-2 inhibitors*

Etoricoxib and celecoxib would be listed in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 July 2013 as follows:

Chemical	Presentations
Etoricoxib	Tab 30 mg, 60 mg, 90 mg and 120 mg
Celecoxib	Cap 100 mg, 200 mg and 400 mg

Etoricoxib and celecoxib would be listed subject to the following restrictions:

Either:

- 1 For preoperative use; or
- 2 For up to five days' postoperative use.

The restrictions applying to meloxicam in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 July 2013 would be widened as follows (new indications shown in **bold**):

Any of the following:

- 1 Haemophilic arthropathy, with both of the following:
  - 2.1 The patient has moderate to severe haemophilia with less than or equal to 5% of normal circulating functional clotting factor; and
  - 2.2 Pain and inflammation associated with haemophilic arthropathy is inadequately controlled by alternative funded treatment options, or alternative funded treatment options are contraindicated; or
- 2 **For preoperative use; or**
- 3 **For up to five days' postoperative use.**

### *Gabapentin*

The restrictions applying to gabapentin in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 July 2013 would be widened to include the following indication:

For preoperative use

## **Background**

### *Methoxyflurane*

Methoxyflurane is an inhaled analgesic agent. An application from the supplier for methoxyflurane to be included on the HML was reviewed by the Analgesic Subcommittee of the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) at its April 2012 meeting. In summary, the Subcommittee recommended that methoxyflurane be listed on the HML with a high priority for patients undergoing painful procedures with an expected duration of less than one hour.

The minutes of the Analgesic Subcommittee meeting were reviewed by the Hospital Pharmaceuticals Subcommittee of PTAC at its September 2012 meeting. Members noted there are a number of safety issues with this agent, such as renal failure and staff exposure to exhaled methoxyflurane, particularly in areas with poor ventilation. Members considered that this issue may require further consideration by PTAC.

Methoxyflurane was then reviewed by PTAC at its November 2012 meeting. The Committee considered that the published evidence in support of methoxyflurane as an analgesic agent compared to alternatives currently available in the hospital setting was poor. The Committee considered that there was a potential for methoxyflurane to be a useful analgesic agent in reducing the need for procedures in theatres, particularly for situations such as painful dressings changes for burns patients. However the Committee considered that the benefits of this over currently utilised sedative and analgesic agents was unclear. The Committee deferred making a recommendation on methoxyflurane pending review of further evidence of its benefit, and safety, in this setting. The Committee noted feedback from anaesthetists suggesting that methoxyflurane be available for restricted indications. The Committee suggested that PHARMAC staff seek further information from anaesthetists on the potential use of methoxyflurane and associated safety issues. Members noted that methoxyflurane has been used significantly in one DHB, and considered that it would be useful for the Committee to be able to review an audit of this use.

Relevant minutes are available on PHARMAC's website at [www.pharmac.govt.nz/2012/11/19/Nervous%20System%20Group%20Web%20Minutes.pdf](http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/2012/11/19/Nervous%20System%20Group%20Web%20Minutes.pdf)

This proposal would see methoxyflurane listed on the HML restricted as per the Analgesic Subcommittee's recommendations. We intend to work with DHB hospitals to collect data on the use of methoxyflurane over the coming months to assist in further review by PTAC; the results of this review may ultimately result in changes to the funding of methoxyflurane in the future.

### *COX-2 inhibitors*

The cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) inhibitors etoricoxib, celecoxib and meloxicam are anti-inflammatory agents. During consultation on the list of Nervous System medications to be included in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 July 2013, we received feedback that there is some use of COX-2 inhibitors in the surgical setting.

### *Gabapentin*

Gabapentin is a treatment for epilepsy and for neuropathic pain. During consultation on the list of Nervous System medications to be included in Part II of Section H of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 July 2013, we received feedback that there is some use of gabapentin in the surgical setting.