



Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia[®]

Professor Andrew Wilson
Chair, Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)
MDP 952, GPO Box 9848
Canberra, ACT 2601

15 May 2023

To whom it may concern:

Please find the submission of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee on the ongoing Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing of Dupilumab (Dupixent[®]) for the treatment of chronic severe atopic dermatitis in people aged 12 years and over.

Background

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA) is a charitable, non-profit organisation established in 1993 to support those affected by allergic disease including atopic dermatitis (also known as atopic eczema). A&AA is dedicated to assisting individuals, their caregivers and all in the community in the management of allergic conditions. A&AA's aim is to enable individuals and their families to enjoy an optimal quality of life whilst minimising risk to their health and wellbeing.

A&AA strives to raise awareness of allergic disease in the community and provides evidence-based information, resources and services to support children and adults living with allergic disease and those who care for them. A&AA has members across all states and territories of Australia. We have a Medical Advisory Board that consists of clinical immunology/allergy specialists who are also members of Australia's peak medical body, ASCIA (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy). A&AA and ASCIA have partnered to progress the National Allergy Council—
www.nationalallergystrategy.org.au

Submission

A&AA is grateful for the opportunity to forward a submission expressing the importance of Dupilumab remaining PBS listed for people with severe atopic dermatitis (AD). Prior to the PBS listing of Dupilumab for AD, A&AA had made two submissions to PBAC about the potential of this drug to be life changing if it was readily available. We provided case studies in these submissions of the profound effect that Dupilumab had on those who had been fortunate to access the drug prior to the PBS listing, and we invite you to revisit those stories. Since the PBS listing of Dupilumab we have indeed heard many more heart-warming stories about the profound effect access to this drug has had on the quality of life of people who have severe AD.

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia – Your trusted charity for allergy support

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Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic condition that requires ongoing care. Standard treatment for moderate to severe AD includes twice daily skin care regime that includes non-soap bathing/showering, generous use of moisturisers, application of topical corticosteroid and additional measures to treat or prevent infections including oral antibiotics and bleach baths. Wet dressings are also used at times. For some, the above management that greatly impacts the individual's (and family's) life is still not enough. People with severe, difficult to manage AD are almost always under the care of a dermatologist and/or a clinical allergy/immunology specialist. Those with severe AD have often, aside from continued treatment as stated above, taken long term oral corticosteroids or other immunosuppressant medications (such as cyclosporin azothyoprine, methotrexate and mycophenylate). While these medications frequently provide varying degrees of relief, long term use of these medications is not desirable because of serious short and long term side effects. Relapse of severe AD, once off the medications, is common.

Since Dupilumab has been available on the PBS, people taking the medication have dramatically improved signs and symptoms of AD that has allowed them to move from a restricted lifestyle that limits many activities, including employment, sport, socialising and outdoor activities, and therefore improve quality of life. An increased rate of depression and suicidality is reported in patients with severe AD, and the improvement in mental health afforded by this drug is a significant component of the improvement in quality of life.

It should be noted that these patients still need to continue with their strict regime of basic daily management, as outlined above. However, the requirement for long term corticosteroids and other immunosuppressant medications has been reduced and their symptoms and signs of AD have finally improved.

Access to this drug has truly been life changing for those who have accessed it since it was PBS listed. A&AA implores the PBAC to continue to make this drug available for those people with severe, difficult to control AD who are under the care of a dermatologist and/or clinical allergist/immunologist that has not responded favourably to other currently available topical treatments. These patients have a poor quality of life that we know has the potential to be improved and managed with long term use of Dupilumab.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Said AM
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Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia

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