

23 September 2024

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand

Submission in Support of Pharmac Proposals to:

- A) Fund lisdexamfetamine for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- B) Remove the renewal criteria for stimulant treatments

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand Te Kāhui Mātai Arotamariki o Aotearoa is an incorporated society with a multidisciplinary membership of roughly 700 professionals, predominantly clinicians (nurses, doctors, and allied health professionals) working in child health.

A) Proposal to fund lisdexamfetamine for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand (PSNZ) supports this proposal.

ADHD is a common disorder in children and adults, and as noted in the Mental Health Subcommittee of PTAC meeting held on 10 September 2021, untreated ADHD can be associated with significant adverse outcomes such as:

- Impaired school and occupational performance
- Lowered socioeconomic status
- Increased risk of mental health disorders and substance misuse
- Significant stress within families
- Difficulties in interpersonal relationships

Appropriate treatment with stimulant medications can significantly improve these outcomes.

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Stimulant medication needs to be available in both immediate-release and modified-release formulations. Many individuals are unable to take multiple doses of stimulant medication required to provide effective treatment throughout the day. Taking several doses of immediate-release preparations per day can also result in fluctuations in effects and side effects, which are smoothed out through the use of modified-release preparations.

While modified-release preparations are available for methylphenidate, a modified-release preparation of dexamfetamine has not been available or funded in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Lisdexamfetamine, which is widely prescribed in Australia, has similar effectiveness in treating ADHD to some of the currently funded treatments, methylphenidate and dexamfetamine.

PSNZ agrees with your clinical advisors, who have indicated that lisdexamfetamine would be particularly beneficial for people:

- Whose ADHD does not respond to methylphenidate, or
- Who experience challenges with taking multiple doses of dexamfetamine throughout the day.

B) Proposal to remove the renewal criteria for stimulant treatments

PSNZ supports the proposal to remove the renewal criteria requiring specialist review for stimulant treatments, to improve ongoing access to these medicines. These medicines are used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy.

We agree that there are increasing difficulties for many people in accessing these treatments. PSNZ is particularly aware of the challenges faced by young adults who transition from paediatric care on stimulant medications but are then unable to access an adult psychiatrist to endorse ongoing treatment. This issue stems from the lack of availability of adult psychiatrists in the state-funded mental health system and financial barriers to accessing private psychiatry.

We also acknowledge the submissions from people with ADHD to Pharmac, reporting:

- Lengthy wait times for specialist appointments
- The high cost of private appointments
- Significant stress from not receiving reassessment before an approval expires

PSNZ agrees with Pharmac's clinical advisors, who determined that if the renewal criteria were removed, the benefits would include:

- Avoiding treatment disruption for patients
- Freeing up specialist and primary care resources to focus on other areas of care or prioritise higher-need patient populations

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PSNZ also notes with concern the record of the Mental Health Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 July 2023, where the Committee reviewed data provided by Pharmac, showing that the renewal criteria for stimulant treatments likely disrupts treatment for a large number of people and appears to impact Māori and Pacific peoples disproportionately.

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