



PHARMAC responds on tolterodine for overactive bladder

In this issue of the *Journal*, Drs Bernie Brenner and Michael Rice (<http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/119-1229/1846>) discuss the funding of tolterodine (Detrusitol®) for overactive bladder.

In 1999 Pharmacia & Upjohn—now Pfizer Pharmaceuticals Group—submitted a proposal for the listing of tolterodine on the Pharmaceutical Schedule for patients who are intolerant or non-responsive to a course of oxybutynin.

The application was considered twice by the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) that same year. After initially recommending the application be declined, PTAC eventually recommended that tolterodine be listed but with a low priority. PTAC considered that the price asked for tolterodine was too high for the limited additional benefit in tolerability over oxybutynin.

In general, applications with low priority PTAC recommendations are treated with less urgency than higher priority recommendations. PHARMAC and the supplier were unable to reach agreement over the listing of tolterodine. Pfizer did not respond to a letter from PHARMAC sent in July 2003 signalling an intention to recommend that the application be declined.

PHARMAC subsequently declined the application in January 2005.* A decision to decline an application does not necessarily prevent further contractual arrangements at a later date; it does however clearly indicate to suppliers that PHARMAC is no longer progressing the application at this stage.

* PHARMAC had considered it neither necessary nor appropriate to consult more widely on whether to decline the application, given the very few enquiries regarding funding and the application being considered by the supplier to be commercially confidential. PHARMAC had received around six patient enquiries regarding the funding status of this product in the last six months of 2004. This included four Community Exceptional Circumstances applications that year. Tolteridone would have had a large budgetary impact if listed (\$5.0 million by year five), especially had patients switched from oxybutynin to tolteridone.

Peter Moodie
Medical Director
PHARMAC
Wellington

Conflicts of interest: Peter Moodie declares no conflicts.