

23 May 2016

Adrienne Martin
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By email: adrienne.martin@pharmac.govt.nz

Proposal relating to azithromycin

Dear Adrienne

The New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) wishes to provide feedback on the above proposal.

Our focus is on the aspect of the proposal that would result in short courses of azithromycin (5 days treatment only) being funded for the following indications: pertussis, chlamydia and mycoplasma genitalium infection when first-line treatments have failed, subject to endorsement on prescription.

We are supportive of this change. Many GPs currently dispense stat doses of azithromycin for chlamydia in the surgery. We note that consideration of funding for azithromycin highlighted concern about the risks of azithromycin resistance. As an important antibiotic, we agree that the use of azithromycin should be limited for specific indications. We note that, at the most recent review of access criteria, PTAC recommended that short courses of azithromycin should be limited to pertussis, chlamydia and mycoplasma genitalium infection when first-line treatments have failed. We consider that requiring endorsement on prescription for the above indications is sensible and would not be onerous.

We note that the other aspect of the proposal would result in azithromycin being funded, subject to special authority criteria, for certain other indications including the prevention of exacerbations of non-cystic fibrosis bronchiectasis for children. If implemented, the proposal is expected to increase the health gains for children with non-cystic bronchiectasis and reduce health care costs to DHBs from reduced hospital admissions. We are also supportive of this aspect of the proposal.

We hope that our feedback has been helpful and look forward to learning the outcome of this consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Child', written in a cursive style.

Dr Stephen Child
NZMA Chair