

Biosimilar Awareness Initiative Reference Group Communiqué

The sixth meeting of the Biosimilar Awareness Initiative Reference Group was held in Canberra on 11 May 2018.

Attendees

The Chair of the meeting was Dr Anthony Hobbs and attendees included representatives from: Arthritis Australia, the Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA), the Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA), Generics and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA), Medicines Australia (MA), NPS MedicineWise, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Consumers Health Forum of Australia, Crohn's and Colitis Australia, The Haematology Society of Australia and New Zealand, and the Medical Oncology Group of Australia.

Guest presenter

Associate Professor Michael Ward, University of South Australia

Purpose

The meeting provided an opportunity for members to hear presentations on the literature review supporting the Initiative and on PBS data, for members to review and provide feedback on the progress of the Initiative, and to have an open discussion in relation to current issues around biosimilar medicines.

Outcomes

Presentation on Literature Review of International Biosimilar Medicines

A presentation was provided by Dr Michael Ward from the University of South Australia on the Literature Review of International Biosimilar Medicines. The presentation's specific focus was on the results of switching and efficacy studies for the Biological disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (bDMARDs), etanercept and infliximab that are listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Departmental Update

The Department provided an update on the latest PBS data on dispensing volumes, expenditure and switching between biological reference and biosimilar brands of PBS-listed drugs.

Future meetings of the Reference Group

Activities to increase biosimilar medicines awareness will continue under the Generics and Biosimilar Medicines Association's (GBMA) education program, led by GBMA Education Ltd.

This continuing work will be undertaken through a grant to the GBMA which was agreed as part of the Strategic Agreement concluded in May 2017 between the Commonwealth and GBMA. There was general agreement by committee members to be engaged in further work on biosimilars education and awareness following the cessation of the Reference Group in its current format.