

Professor Berk has received grant/research support from Stanley Medical Research Foundation, MBF, National Health and Medical Research Council, beyondblue, Geelong Medical Research Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen-Cilag, Lundbeck and Pfizer. He has also been a speaker for Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen-Cilag, Lundbeck, Organon, Pfizer, Sanofi-Synthelabo, Solvay and Wyeth.

Self-test questions
The following statements are either true or false (answers on page 83)

7. Patients with mania are best managed in general practice.
8. In bipolar disorders, patients taking a mood stabilising drug combined with an antidepressant should be regularly reviewed for changes in their mental state.

Your questions to the PBAC

Methylphenidate
The management of adolescents who need stimulant medications is complicated by the restrictions of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). I have a patient who has benefited from using an extended-release formulation of methylphenidate. She is calmer and more relaxed than she was on intermittent doses of the immediate-release formulation. The problem is that my patient is now over 18 years old so cannot receive the extended-release formulation as a PBS prescription. There are probably many adolescents with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder who are well managed with the extended-release formulation. Some of them will continue to need treatment after their eighteenth birthday, but the current PBS authority requirements prevent this. To continue treatment, patients will have to switch to another formulation or a different drug without an age restriction. How can this anomaly in the PBS be rectified?

George Blake
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PBAC response:
In assessing applications and making recommendations for PBS listing, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) is required to take into account a number of criteria, including the indication for which the medicine has been approved for use in Australia. The PBAC cannot make a recommendation on a medicine for use outside its approved indication as registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) as this would go against evidence-based decision making.

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Your questions to the PBAC

Australian Prescriber readers are invited to write in with their questions about decisions of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. The segment “Your questions to the PBAC” will publish selected questions from readers, and answers from the Committee itself. Questions may address issues such as regulatory decisions, pharmaceutical benefits listings, withdrawal of a drug from the market and Authority prescriptions.

It may not be possible to reply to all individual questions. Those letters and responses selected by the Editorial Executive Committee will be published in the journal, subject to the usual editorial controls.