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Report shows more work is needed in fight against cardiovascular disease

MSD today welcomed many of the recommendations proposed in [a report made public by the Department of Health](#) as part of a Post-market Review into MSD's cholesterol lowering medicine Ezetimibe (the product)ⁱ.

The report confirms that the product is an effective option for 280,000 Medicare patients currently taking it who have high cholesterol. The product is used by patients who cannot tolerate common statins (cholesterol lowering medicines) or are already at a maximum tolerated dose of a statin.

The report states that it is a good option for these patients who already access this drug on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Further, it also highlighted the need for more education around taking cholesterol medicines regularly to help prevent heart disease and suggested that existing barriers to prescribing cholesterol lowering medicines should be removed. It also notes that more rigorous analysis could be done to examine the cost effectiveness of these interventions.

While the recommendations about improving patient care can be implemented immediately, more substantive modeling would need to be done before the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee could make a decision on cost effectiveness.

According to the report, *"the review cannot evaluate the model with the rigour expected by the PBAC."*¹

"We are pleased the Federal Government is reviewing this important therapeutic area as cardiovascular disease affects approximately 3.7 million Australians² with high cholesterol contributing to a greater risk of coronary and vascular disease and premature death," MSD Medical Director, Dr Gary Jankelowitz said.

The report confirms the product is prescribed at the right time and generally for the right patients in Australia. It also expresses confidence that a reduction in cholesterol helps reduce the risk of cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes.

MSD is concerned that the report does not fairly consider these benefits in assessing the product's cost-effectiveness for the 280,000 Australians who take this medicine. MSD believes that this medicine has and will continue to deliver good value for money to the Australian government.

MSD will continue to work with government to ensure the cost effectiveness of the product is recognised for Australians with cardiovascular disease. MSD encourages interested stakeholders to put forward detailed submissions to the PBAC to further inform this review.

¹ Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Post-market Review, Ezetimibe Review. December 2016. Available at: <http://www.pbs.gov.au/info/reviews/ezetimibe-review-public-consultation>

² Baker IDI, Change of Heart – Time to End Cardiovascular Complacency. November 2016. Available at: <https://bakeridi.edu.au/impact/advocacy/change-of-heart>

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About MSD

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ⁱ The product's name is only used when discussing the report and the processes involved. The name of the product is not included to promote the medicine in anyway.