



**Re: Best-Value Biological Medicines; Adalimumab & Etanercept**

13 January 2021

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this letter is to update you on the best-value biological (BVB) medicine initiative for adalimumab and etanercept. As communicated previously, the HSE-Medicines Management Programme (MMP) recommends the following BVB medicines for adalimumab and etanercept:

- Adalimumab:
  - Citrate-containing: **Idacio<sup>®</sup>, Imraldi<sup>®</sup>**
  - Citrate-free: **Amgevita<sup>®</sup>, Hulio<sup>®</sup>**
- Etanercept: **Benepali<sup>®</sup>**

Since the publication of these recommendations in May 2019, there has been a significant increase in the prescribing of the BVB medicines. In November 2020, **58%** of patients in receipt of adalimumab 40 mg pre-filled pen or syringe, and **57%** of patients in receipt of etanercept 25/50 mg pre-filled pen or syringe were prescribed a BVB medicine. Over 11,883 patients have been initiated on, or switched to a BVB medicine since June 2019.

In recognition of the efficiencies that result from the prescribing of the BVB medicines, the gain share arrangement is available to consultant-led teams to fund service delivery or enhancement, when they initiate a patient on, or switch them to a BVB medicine. This will continue to be available up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Branded adalimumab or etanercept are substantially more expensive than the BVB medicines. Communication by the HSE CEO, Paul Reid, to Hospital Group CEOs in March 2020, sets a target of a minimum of 80% of patients to be switched to a BVB medicine from branded adalimumab or etanercept.

In light of the above, all patients who are currently prescribed a non-BVB medicine (i.e. Enbrel<sup>®</sup>, Humira<sup>®</sup>) should be considered for switching to a BVB medicine when they present for their repeat prescription. Where a decision is made to continue a patient on a non-BVB medicine, the reason for such should be recorded in the patient's clinical notes; this information may be required at a later date to complete an application for continued reimbursement support of a non-BVB medicine.

MMP pharmacists are available to engage with consultants and clinical teams to provide support for initiation of, and switching to the BVB medicines. Please contact the MMP ([mmp@hse.ie](mailto:mmp@hse.ie)) if you wish to avail of this support.

Further information on the BVB medicine initiative including information for healthcare professionals, and resources to support initiating patients on, or switching them to the BVB medicines are available on the MMP website ([www.hse.ie/yourmedicines](http://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines)) in the section entitled *Best-value medicines*.

My thanks for your ongoing support in promoting safe, effective and cost-effective prescribing.

With best wishes,



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[www.hse.ie/yourmedicines](http://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines)