



Reimbursement of Medicinal Products containing Glatiramer Acetate: Questions and Answers for Healthcare Professionals February 2021

Introduction

In October 2020, following a review of medicinal products containing glatiramer acetate, the HSE-Medicines Management Programme (MMP) identified a preferred product for glatiramer acetate on the High Tech Arrangement; Brabio®.

The MMP recommends that when initiating a patient on a medicinal product containing glatiramer acetate, the clinician should prescribe Brabio®. The MMP also recommends that prescribers should give consideration to switching a patient to Brabio® when a repeat prescription is being issued for a medicinal product containing glatiramer acetate.

An evaluation report, which includes information on the process followed to identify the preferred product, is available on the website of the MMP under *Evaluation Reports*:
<https://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines>

What changes are being introduced for glatiramer acetate from 1 February 2021?

From 1 February 2021, it is HSE policy that all adult patients who are commencing treatment with glatiramer acetate should be prescribed the MMP preferred product Brabio®.

Why have these changes been introduced?

The preferred product is provided to the HSE at a much lower cost than the original version of glatiramer acetate. This provides an opportunity to reduce the cost to the HSE of providing this medicine to patients. Prescribing of the preferred product will lead to significant savings for the health service, which can assist in facilitating access to new, innovative medicines for patients.

What do these changes mean for new patients i.e. those commencing treatment with glatiramer acetate?

From **1 February 2021**, all adult patients who are commencing treatment with glatiramer acetate should be prescribed Brabio®.

What is the definition of a new patient?

A new patient, is an adult, who has never been prescribed glatiramer acetate before, or has not received this medicine within the last six months.

What do these changes mean for existing patients prescribed glatiramer acetate prior to 1 February 2021?

There is currently no change for existing patients. They will continue to receive their medicine under the High Tech Arrangement from their community pharmacy.

However, when existing patients present for a repeat prescription for a medicinal product containing glatiramer acetate, **the prescriber could consider switching the patient to Brabio®.**

Do these changes apply to all patients?

These changes **do not apply to paediatric patients** i.e. patients who are less than 18 years of age.

Where can I get information on the preferred product for glatiramer acetate?

Information on the preferred product is available on the website of the MMP under *Best-value medicines*:

<https://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines>

This includes support materials for clinical teams who are initiating patients on or switching them to the preferred product:

- MMP product information sheet for Brabio®
- Information on patient support services for Brabio®
- Template switching letter for clinics

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

MMP pharmacists are available to engage with consultants and clinical teams to provide support for initiation of, and switching to the identified preferred product. Please contact the MMP (mmp@hse.ie) if you wish to avail of this support.