

Saxenda registered for obesity management

Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals' Saxenda (liraglutide [rys]) is now registered in Australia as the first once-daily glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist for chronic weight management.

Saxenda is indicated as an adjunct to a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity for chronic weight management in adults with obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²) or who are overweight (BMI ≥ 27 kg/m²) in the presence of at least one weight-related comorbid condition.

Saxenda was evaluated in the SCALE (Satiety and Clinical Adiposity-Liraglutide Evidence) in a non-diabetic and diabetic people phase 3 clinical trial program, which involved more than 5,000 study participants with obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²) or who are overweight (BMI ≥ 27 kg/m²) with weight-related comorbidities. Trial data showed that Saxenda, in combination with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity, resulted in greater weight loss than reduced-calorie diet and physical activity alone.

Joseph Proietto, Professor Emeritus, University of Melbourne and Head of the Weight Control Clinic, Austin Health, said: "Obesity is a complex and multifactorial disease requiring multiple management options. Obesity is associated with serious comorbidities, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer. The risk of morbidity and mortality also increases with the severity of obesity. A five per cent to



10 per cent weight loss can improve obesity-related comorbidities, so we welcome the introduction of a new therapy option to help people with obesity achieve and maintain a healthier body weight."

While GPs and specialists will be able to evaluate this new medication via the Product Familiarisation Program, the manufacturer has also recognised the important role that pharmacists will play in assisting patients who are prescribed Saxenda. For this reason, Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals has engaged the assistance of Kos Sclavos, former Pharmacy Guild president, to develop a patient program inside the community pharmacy.

Community pharmacists have important roles to play in addressing this epidemic, as they not only have insight into the weight-

related comorbidities being treated in people living with obesity, but can also respond to direct questions. Considering that there are many options available to a person wanting to control their weight, a pharmacist is the ideal person to provide advice as to which options are based on scientific evidence and those that may have little or no proven effectiveness. This is critical in a disease area that is full of misunderstanding and emotional implications for patients.

"In many cases, the patient will also need instructions on how to use the device, and encouragement to keep up with lifestyle changes," Mr Sclavos said.

"These will all support the quality use of medicine. For this reason, Novo Nordisk will fund additional patient support to be delivered by community pharmacists each time a patient presents with a prescription from their doctor. I am proud to have assisted in the development of the program."

Saxenda is a once-daily GLP-1 analogue with 97 per cent similarity to naturally occurring human GLP-110, a hormone that is released in response to food intake. As with human GLP-1, Saxenda regulates appetite and lowers body weight through decreased food intake. As with other GLP-1 receptor agonists, liraglutide stimulates insulin secretion and reduces glucagon secretion in a glucose-dependent manner, which may also lead to a reduction of blood glucose. ^{RP}