



Together we're stronger
Tangata tū pakari tonu

consult@pharmac.govt.nz

Dear Pharmac

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to list oral vinorelbine without restriction on the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

I write on behalf of the Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition (BCAC). BCAC is a coalition of over 30 breast cancer organisations in Aotearoa as well as individual members. We support, inform and represent those diagnosed with breast cancer in Aotearoa from an evidence-based patient perspective.

BCAC supports the availability of oral vinorelbine on the Pharmaceutical Schedule. It is our understanding that this will enable the switch of many current patients receiving parenteral therapy to oral therapy. This will be of particular benefit to patients who are living outside main centres as it will make it easier for them to access and maintain treatment. Patients who currently have to attend oncology outpatient departments for chemotherapy encounter many practical difficulties in attending clinics, including transport and parking problems as well as the time involved in travelling to and waiting for treatment. This may affect other family/whānau members who are required to take them to appointments. It may require them to interrupt work or study, which is stressful and costly.

This particularly affects people who live in remote, rural or non-urban parts of New Zealand. It is a significant benefit to patients to be able to receive treatment in the community. Thus, we support any treatment that can enable patients to be treated in their own home or community.

This is particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when patients who are immunocompromised can avoid contact with people who are potentially infected.


We consider that the availability of oral vinorelbine may be of particular benefit for wāhine Māori and Pasifika women with breast cancer who experience a number of barriers to treatment access.



When making this treatment available for community use, it is essential that adequate and appropriate instructions must be given to patients and whānau about medicine administration and safe storage in the home. It is also important that patients continue to be under the active management of medical oncologists or oncology clinics, particularly should adverse events occur.

As far as the patient numbers are concerned, we believe that most of those treated will be switches from current treatment, however there may also be an increase in usage due to the availability of oral treatment.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E. P. J. Burgess." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Libby Burgess MNZM

Chair, Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition