



ESC News Update: Advocacy in Action

New atopic dermatitis drug hits road block
in path to patient access in Canada

CADTH gives negative recommendation to dupilumab



Patients with atopic dermatitis (AD) were very pleased with the recent Health Canada approval of dupilumab (brand name Dupixent), the first biologic drug for the treatment of moderate-to-severe AD in patients over the age of 18. Health Canada's role is to assess the safety and efficacy of drugs that are sold in Canada. Canadians suffering with AD (the most common form of eczema) have been waiting desperately for new therapies to manage their disease.

Since Health Canada's approval of dupilumab, the biologic drug has been available in Canada and

many patients are already receiving the treatment. For individuals with private insurance, their plan may cover the cost of dupilumab, however for patients who rely on provincial or territorial drug plan coverage, the process of reimbursement (i.e. whether their province or territory will pay for the medication) is still in the early stages, and dupilumab has hit a roadblock in this process.

CADTH gave a negative recommendation to dupilumab

On July 9th the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) gave a negative recommendation to dupilumab. Their decision was based on a lack of clinical evidence. The CADTH report cites a lack of evidence comparing this new drug to off-label systemic medications which are sometimes used to treat moderate-to-severe AD that does not respond to typical therapy (such as topical medications and phototherapy). This negative recommendation is devastating to patients who have been desperately waiting for access to this new medication, as it may prevent provinces and territories from funding the treatment.

About the CADTH review process

The first step in provincial and territorial reimbursement for drugs is a review by CADTH, an arm of the Canadian federal government which makes recommendations to the provinces and territories about medicines accepted for public drug plans (drug plans funded by the provinces and territories). For new medications, CADTH conducts a review of clinical evidence submitted by the drug manufacturer and also considers patient input in this process. ESC submitted patient input, and we thank all of the patients who shared their stories and helped us illustrate the burden of this disease.

Provincial and territorial governments then use the CADTH recommendation as a tool to make decisions about whether or not to reimburse particular drugs in each province and territory.

This decision could have devastating implications for patients

ESC's concern with the negative CADTH recommendation is that provinces and territories could choose not to reimburse dupilumab. ESC wants patients in need to be able to access this medication.

"As someone who experienced the life-changing benefits of Dupixent during its clinical trial, I am shocked and saddened with this decision," says atopic dermatitis patient Mike Lanigan. "It gave me relief from the non-stop itch and pain, and the ability to regain my confidence and ambition in life. If Dupixent wasn't covered for me, I wouldn't be able to afford it and my disease would return. For patients like me, who suffer with this terrible disease, this CADTH decision is devastating."

ESC is advocating for patients

ESC is reaching out to all stakeholders across the country to ensure that the impact of atopic dermatitis and the desperate need for effective therapies is fully understood, and you can help. To raise your voice contact ESC by email at info@eczemahelp.ca or call 1-855-ECZEMA-1.

Hope for Quebec patients

***Quebec's health technology agency recognizes
the clinical value of dupilumab***



In Quebec, the drug review process is different than the rest of the country. Quebec has its own health technology agency called *Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux* (INESSS). INESSS, like CADTH, is responsible for assessing and evaluating the costs and benefits of new medications and treatments and provides recommendations on their reimbursement and clinical use in Quebec.

On May 9th, INESSS published their review of dupilumab, and the good news is INESSS recognized the clinical value of dupilumab. The next step is for INESSS to negotiate cost with the manufacturer, and ESC hopes the negotiations are swift so that patients in Quebec can access this medication as soon as possible.

ESC is advocating for eczema patients

Want to get involved? Share your story with ESC, and help improve the lives of Canadians living with eczema

ESC has been raising awareness about the impact of eczema, and all types of dermatitis, with government agencies across the country. Recently ESC has met with Health Canada as well as Ministers of Health to ensure they understand the burden of disease and the need for better treatments. As a patient or caregiver you can play an integral role in these conversations and help advocate for Canadians living with eczema and atopic dermatitis. By sharing your story, you can shed light on what it is really like for the tens of thousands of Canadians who battle this condition each and every day.

Do you feel frustrated when people don't understand how challenging it can be to live with eczema? Do you feel like your disease is minimized or that people see it as only 'dry skin'? Do you want to give back and help improve the lives of Canadians suffering with this often debilitating condition? If you answered yes to any of these questions, please consider becoming an advocate with ESC. If you'd like to share your story, or simply share photos of what a real life eczema flare looks like please email Jennifer at info@eczemahelp.ca.



Photo caption: From left to right: Hon. Brandy Payne, Alberta Ministry of Health; Amanda Cresswell-Melville, Executive Director, Eczema Society of Canada; and Chad Mitchell, Executive Director, Pharmaceutical and Health Benefits, Alberta Health.

ESC is in the news!

Global News covers the potential impact of CADTH decision on Canadian eczema sufferers

ESC was pleased to be interviewed for the Global News's story on the recent CADTH recommendation and the impact it may have on Canadian eczema sufferers.

To read the full article, click the link below:

Canada's drug agency advised against reimbursing a costly eczema drug - here's why people are worried

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4360291/no-coverage-for-eczema-drug-recommendation/>

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Find a support volunteer at

www.eczemahelp.ca

Eczema Help

Contact us at 1-855-Eczema-1 or email us at info@eczemahelp.ca



Hope

"For support and resources, there is no finer organization than the Eczema Society of Canada."

*Maryam Sanati, Editor-in-chief,
Chatelaine Magazine*