

Ranbaxy (UK) Ltd comments in response to the assessment report: Health Technology Appraisal – Corticosteroids for the treatment of chronic asthma in adults and children aged 12 years and over.

1) Contrary to the findings of the economic analysis we believe that the use of fixed combination inhalers will be significantly more expensive for the NHS than using single inhalers and this should be made clear in any recommendation.

The report indicates that there is no cost difference between using an inhaled steroid within a fixed combination with a long acting beta₂ (Seretide / Symbicort) compared to that of using individual steroid and long acting beta₂ inhalers. Within the parameters of the Economic Analysis this may be correct; however this is already out of date. The analysis did not include the Budesonide Easyhaler range which was launched in the UK in March 2006. Budesonide Easyhaler is 50% less per dose than Pulmicort Turbohaler which may have a significant impact to the cost analysis. Additionally the analysis can not account for new products coming to market. Formoterol Easyhaler will be launched on March 1st 2007. This will be priced at half the cost of Oxis Turbohaler (per dose) and used as a separate inhaler in conjunction with Budesonide Easyhaler this will cost at least 38% less than the equivalent fixed combination inhaler (Symbicort)

Based on industry sales figures (IMS BPI) in 2006 Symbicort Turbohaler sold 2,409,400 units at a total cost of £89.9 million. A 38% reduction in cost would equate to a potential saving of £34.1million to the NHS

The Easyhaler range may be one of the first inhalers to significantly reduce the cost of using the steroid and long acting beta 2 in combination; however it is unlikely to be the last. The Economic Analysis can not account for future generic versions of single products which are due to come off patent before the fixed combination products. When products have come off patent historically the price comes down, if fixed combinations are recommended over the use of 2 single inhalers this cost benefit will be reduced.

If you require any further information please contact: