


## Brand changes for cardiovascular medicines: carvedilol, ezetimibe and ezetimibe with simvastatin

Over the next few months there will be changes in the subsidised brand of three cardiovascular medicines. The first medicine to undergo a brand change was carvedilol on 1 April, 2015, which will be followed by ezetimibe and ezetimibe with simvastatin from 1 June, 2015.


The same Special Authority restrictions for access to ezetimibe and ezetimibe with simvastatin will apply after the brand change.

 For further information, see:

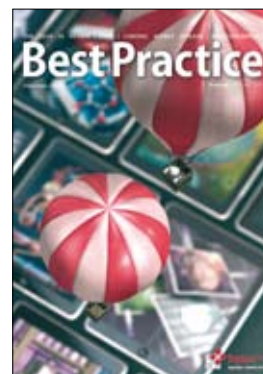
[www.pharmac.health.nz/medicines/my-medicine-has-changed/cardiovascular-medicines/](http://www.pharmac.health.nz/medicines/my-medicine-has-changed/cardiovascular-medicines/)

Patient information can be downloaded and printed from the website or ordered from: [www.pharmaonline.co.nz](http://www.pharmaonline.co.nz)

If you have any enquiries about these changes, please phone 0800 60 00 50 between 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday.

 Special Authority forms are available from:

[www.pharmac.govt.nz/SAForms](http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/SAForms)



## Quality indicators for opioid prescribing

Dear Editor,

Re: "Helping patients cope with chronic non-malignant pain: it's not about opioids", *BPJ* 63 (Sep, 2015).

Thank you for this very useful and comprehensive article. There is now a new tool available in New Zealand, not mentioned in the article, which can be used by individual practitioners or by their services to improve the quality of prescribing for chronic non-malignant pain.

With funding from the Health Quality and Safety Commission, seven suites of indicators were developed in 2012 to facilitate safer prescribing of opioids in this context. The indicators identify appropriate numerators and denominators and list the caveats in indicator implementation and interpretation of the results. The indicators are arranged in suites of related indices and cover important topic areas, aligned to the 10 Universal Precautions outlined in Pages 36 and 37 of the *BPJ* article. The indicators are appropriate for use in an audit cycle with the intention of continuous quality improvement. Any practitioners, specialists or generalists, are able to access these indicators on the HQSC website and use them for quality improvement and to ensure that their patients with chronic pain are offered appropriate and evidence-based advice and support during their convalescence.

The resources are available from: [www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/projects/atlas-of-healthcare-variation/opioids](http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/projects/atlas-of-healthcare-variation/opioids)

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