



## Methylphenidate (Ritalin LA): a second controlled-release formulation PBS listed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder



A second controlled-release formulation of the psychostimulant methylphenidate (Ritalin LA) was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 April 2008. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) agreed that Ritalin LA and the previously listed controlled-release formulation (Concerta) are similarly effective for a similar cost.<sup>1</sup>

The restricted listing allows Ritalin LA to be prescribed for patients aged 6 to 18 years inclusive for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).<sup>1</sup> The patient must have previously responded to the immediate-release formulation of methylphenidate (Ritalin) without serious adverse events. Relevant State and Territory regulations must also be followed when prescribing psychostimulants.

Immediate-release methylphenidate should be used for initial dose titration before switching to an equivalent dose of the controlled-release formulation.<sup>2</sup> A once-daily dose of Ritalin LA is similar to twice-daily dosing with immediate-release methylphenidate (a once-daily dose of Concerta is equivalent to three-times-daily dosing). Half of the Ritalin LA dose is released immediately and the other half about 4 hours later, eliminating the need for taking medication at school.<sup>3</sup>

### References

1. Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. November 2007 PBAC outcomes — positive recommendations. 2007. <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pbacrec-Nov07-positive> (accessed 20 February 2008).
2. Psychotropic Writing Group. Psychotropic. In: eTG complete [CD-ROM]. Melbourne: Therapeutic Guidelines Limited, 2004.
3. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd. Ritalin 10/Ritalin LA product information. 6 March 2007. Australia.

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The information contained in this material is derived from a critical analysis of a wide range of authoritative evidence. Any treatment decisions based on this information should be made in the context of clinical circumstances of each patient.