

Singapore MOH enrolls Pfizer's oral drug for atopic dermatitis (AD) under MAF listing

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MOH efforts in reducing the burden of atopic dermatitis (AD) in Singapore



Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH) has listed Pfizer Singapore's Atopic dermatitis (AD) oral tablet abrocitinib under Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) on 1 March 2024. Under MAF subsidy, MOH is enabling public healthcare institutions to treat patients with moderate-to-severe AD undergoing systemic therapy with topical medications or if the topical treatments are otherwise medically inadvisable are now eligible to access alternative treatment options, such as JAK inhibitors, at a subsidized rate.

AD, also known as atopic eczema, is a common and chronic inflammatory disorder that affects 11% of adults and 20% of children in Singapore. Although adult onset is uncommon, a significant number of patients in Singapore develop the condition after the age of 21.

Patients with moderate-to-severe AD often have weaker skin barriers, which may be triggered by environmental factors or genetic variations that impair normal skin barrier function.

"Phototherapy, conventional immunosuppressants and lately biological therapies delivered via bi-weekly injections are usually considered for patients with moderate-to-severe AD who do not respond adequately to topical treatments. However, there remains a clinical need for stronger and convenient treatment options such as oral JAK inhibitors for those who are affected by the persistent itching and discomfort," said Adjunct Associate Professor Derrick Aw Chen Wee, Education Director and Senior Consultant, Dermatology Service, Sengkang General Hospital.

"While mainstream treatments such as topical and oral steroids are subsidized, newer innovative therapies such as JAK inhibitors have remained out of reach for many patients here," said Ursula Soh, founder of Eczema Support Group Singapore (ESGS).