

CHF calls for informed consent on the side-effects of Prolia

Friday 1 November 2024

Consumers need to be informed and aware of the side-effects associated with using the osteoporosis drug Prolia, says Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF).

CHF's comments come after media reports of concerned consumers having a lack of informed consent over Australia's most common osteoporosis drug and are sometimes feeling "scared into" taking it.

“While Prolia is a safe drug, some consumers report that practitioners are not effectively communicating the risks, especially those related to side effects,” said CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny.

Prolia is the brand name for the most common medication used to treat osteoporosis in Australia. It's administered by injection every six months and shouldn't be late or skipped.

CHF is concerned that consumers are missing out on seeing side effects listed on the product information leaflet, due to it needing to be refrigerated then taken directly from the pharmacy to their GP.

“What we are seeing being reported is a lack of information being provided to consumers at both points of care which needs to be addressed. While the information leaflet is a useful addition, it can't really replace the essential conversation,” said Dr Deveny.

As outlined in media reports, some consumers have expressed concern regarding Prolia related side effects. These are often most significant when people stop taking such medication and can include side effects include bone tissue death of the jaw and the increased likelihood of spinal injuries.

CHF recognises that while certain medications play an important role in treating osteoporosis, consumers have a right to adequate information up-

front to decide if it is right for them and if any evidence-based alternative treatments are available.

“This essentially boils down to consumers being provided with up-to-date information by practitioners and dispensers while having the right to choice. Crucial information should be explained by the clinical team in a clear and engaging manner,” said Dr Deveny.

Undergoing new medical treatment for painful conditions is an already stressful and sometimes confusing process for consumers. The understanding of the side effects of these treatments should not fully sit with the consumer and should be an open conversation between them and their healthcare provider, stressed Dr Deveny.

CHF believes that there is a role for clinical peaks and universities to further educate their members and students in developing their communication and inter-personal skills, and help practitioners understand how to create a safe psychological environment for their patients.

“We suggest all consumers seek out high quality information on their prescribed medicine. Where they have questions, they should feel supported to explore these with the relevant providers and practitioners. It is also the duty of healthcare practitioners ensure that consumers are engaging in quality questions and answers,” said Dr Deveny.

Media contact

Benjamin Graham

Public Affairs Manager – CHF

0461 545 392

Benjamin.graham@chf.org.au