Therapeutics Technical Advisory Group | Te Rōpū Haumanu Kowheori-19

Update for health professionals: Use of Evusheld™ and circulating COVID-19 variants

Date: 21 December 2022

The Therapeutics Technical Advisory Group (Therapeutics TAG) was established by the Ministry of Health in August 2021 to provide expert advice on existing and emerging medicines for use in the management of COVID-19.

Key changes to the use of Evusheld™ in relation to emerging variants.

- Evusheld™ (tixagevimab/cilgavimab) is currently (as of December 2022) predicted to have neutralising activity against fewer than 50% of currently circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants. Therefore, most eligible people are not anticipated to benefit from treatment, unless there is evidence their infection is caused by a variant predictably neutralised by Evusheld.
- The Therapeutic TAG advises, if possible, to let patients who have had Evusheld™ know that the benefit has diminished, they are less protected than before and if they develop symptoms, to test and seek treatment.
- Pharmac has approved funding for administration of Evusheld™ as treatment. This would typically be under the oversight of an Infectious Diseases or other specialist familiar with Evusheld™, for a suspected or confirmed susceptible SARS-CoV2 variant.
- Therapeutic TAG advises that Paxlovid™ (or remdesivir) are preferable treatments to Evusheld.
- There is no evidence to suggest a benefit from prescribing both an antiviral and antibody treatment routinely.

Please note, this document is a summary of key changes and should be considered alongside:

- The Clinical management of COVID-19 in hospitalised patients (link)
- Use of Evusheld for the Prevention and Treatment of COVID-19 (link)