

## VIC CONSUMER MEDIA RELEASE

### **New treatment option for schizophrenia – Reagila® – to be listed on PBS**

- **Adults living with schizophrenia will have access to a new treatment option with Reagila® (cariprazine) reimbursed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from 1 September, 2021.<sup>1</sup>**
- **There continues to be a significant, unmet need in treating schizophrenia. With a complex range of symptoms,<sup>2</sup> treatment is not a “one size fits all”.<sup>3</sup> This listing will give adults living with schizophrenia, another affordable, mental illness treatment.**
- **Affecting approximately 90,000 Australians,<sup>4</sup> schizophrenia is considered our nation’s most disabling, and heavily stigmatised mental illness,<sup>5</sup> with the average life expectancy of those with the illness, 12.5 to 16.5 years below that of the general population.<sup>4</sup>**

#### **EMBARGOED: 7:30AM AEST, SUNDAY, 29 AUGUST, 2021**

**MELBOURNE** – A new treatment for schizophrenia in adults, Reagila® (cariprazine), will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) from 1 September, 2021, providing patients with an additional treatment option.<sup>1</sup>

Schizophrenia is a complex psychiatric disorder<sup>2</sup> comprising a range of symptoms, including positive symptoms, such as hallucinations and delusions,<sup>6,7</sup> and negative symptoms, such as social withdrawal and apathy.<sup>8,9</sup>

Reagila® – in-licensed by Seqirus, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CSL – is an atypical antipsychotic which indirectly targets two neurotransmitters in the brain – dopamine and serotonin.<sup>10</sup> Neurotransmitters are considered the brain’s ‘chemical pathways’.<sup>11</sup>

Approved in the US since 2015, and EU since 2017, Reagila® is now approved in over 52 countries for the treatment of schizophrenia in adult patients.<sup>12</sup>

Head, Department of Psychiatry, Monash University and Director of Research, Mental Health Program, Monash Health, Professor Suresh Sundram, Melbourne, said this new listing spotlights the impact of schizophrenia in the community, and the need to ensure people living with the mental illness, have affordable access to a range of treatments.

“The complex nature of schizophrenia<sup>2</sup> means treatment is not a “one size fits all”,<sup>3</sup> and additional options are welcome to help reduce the current barriers to schizophrenia treatment,” said Prof Sundram.

“The annual cost to Australian society of psychosis is an estimated \$6 billion. However this figure does not account for the pain endured by individuals, their families, and the supporting community.<sup>4</sup>

“Schizophrenia is also thought to be among the most complex and persistent mental illnesses because of its very high, associated death rates,<sup>13</sup> often due to preventable physical diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, infections, and suicide,”<sup>14,15</sup> Prof Sundram said.

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) CEO, Tony Stevenson, Brisbane, welcomed the reimbursement of a new treatment option for those living with schizophrenia.

“The availability and accessibility of affordable treatment options for adults living with schizophrenia is crucial for this patient community, given the stigma they experience with the disorder<sup>15</sup>, and resulting social isolation,”<sup>8,9</sup> said Mr Stevenson.

“Sadly, stigma can contribute to the impact of psychosis in schizophrenia, delays in accessing treatment, social isolation, stress, and furthermore, places those affected at higher risk for a more severe course of illness.”<sup>16</sup>

Mental health support peer group volunteer, and mature aged student, J.J, 38, Sydney, was diagnosed with schizophrenia in his early twenties following multiple psychotic episodes. Although he endured several turbulent years throughout his twenties, J.J finally grew to accept his mental illness.

“A big part of my journey to date, has been recognising that there was something wrong with my mental health, and to understand and accept the impact that that my symptoms would have on my life,” J.J said.

Today he feels compelled to share his personal story, to heighten community awareness, understanding and acceptance of, and compassion for, those living with the disabling mental illness.

“People with schizophrenia are often disadvantaged in the community. It is possible however, for those living with schizophrenia, to contribute to society. We should therefore, collectively, try to reduce the barriers for those affected by the illness, to enable them to play their role in the community,” said J.J.

“This includes the provision of affordable access to necessary support, and treatment.”

Seqirus Head of Medical Affairs Asia Pacific, Dr Jonathan Anderson, Melbourne, said the Australian Government’s investment in innovative medicines, like Reagila®, was important to ensure Australians have timely and affordable access to treatments which may help to address the unmet need in schizophrenia.

“Seqirus is proud to make Reagila® available in Australia for the first time, and we thank the Australian Government for their support in delivering this PBS listing – ensuring Australian adults living with schizophrenia can access this innovative medicine, and do so in an affordable way,” said Dr Anderson.

“We know that additional investment in treatment options and support is critical to changing the statistics for people living with schizophrenia, their carers, family and friends.”

**ENDS**

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## **DIGITAL MEDIA KIT**

[www.schizophreniamediakit.com.au](http://www.schizophreniamediakit.com.au)

## **VNR**

[www.vimeo.com/592544606/d1188a8813](http://www.vimeo.com/592544606/d1188a8813)

## ABOUT SEQIRUS

Seqirus, a CSL company, is a leading provider of essential vaccines and pharmaceuticals. We have served Australia's healthcare needs for over a century, and today we operate Australia's only local manufacturing facility for seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccine. Seqirus produces a range of unique medicines in the National Interest, and also in-licences a broad range of paediatric and adult vaccines and specialty pharmaceutical products. <http://www.seqirus.com/>.

## ABOUT REAGILA®

Reagila® was TGA approved in November 2020 as a Schedule 4 (Prescription Only Medicine).<sup>17</sup> Reagila® is indicated for the treatment of schizophrenia in adult patients. Reagila® will be listed on the PBS from 1 September, 2021 for schizophrenia, and requires a Streamlined Authority prescription.

## SIDE-EFFECTS

The most common side-effects of Reagila are feelings of restlessness, inability to sit still, and Parkinsonism. The common side-effects are weight increase; decreased or increased appetite; abnormal level of lipids; sleep disorders or sleepiness; anxiety; dizziness; involuntary twisting movements and strange postures; excessive teeth grinding or jaw clenching; drooling; persistent blinking; movement problems; tongue movement disturbance; blurred vision; fast, irregular heartbeat; high blood pressure; nausea (feeling sick); vomiting; constipation; increased liver enzymes; increase of an enzyme found in your heart/brain/skeletal muscles. These are mild to moderate side-effects of Reagila®. Other rare or serious side-effects may also occur.<sup>18</sup> Speak to your healthcare professional or doctor for more information.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Reagila® is not recommended for use during pregnancy, and in women of childbearing potential not using effective contraception. Breastfeeding is not recommended whilst taking Reagila®. For further information, including Contraindications, Precautions, and Interactions, refer to the Product Information and Consumer Medicine Information, or your doctor or pharmacist.

Reagila® Consumer Medicine Information can be found [here](#).

## Disclosure statement

No compensation was provided to Professor Suresh Sundram, Mr Tony Stevenson, Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia or J.J for this media announcement, and the opinions expressed are their own. Professor Sundram has received payment from Seqirus for consultancy services, including acting on Advisory Boards. Professor Sundram has been briefed by Seqirus on the approved use of this product.

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