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Title: Comparative efficacy and costs of the treatment of moderate to severe persistent asthma with a new dry-powder inhaled beclomethasone dipropionate and formoterol combination

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Body: INTRODUCTION: The new pharmacologic approaches for moderate to severe persistent asthma treatment involve dry-powder inhaled corticosteroid + long-acting beta2-agonist. OBJECTIVES: To evaluate the efficacy and total direct costs of beclomethasone dipropionate/formoterol (BCL/FOR) (Foster® Nexthaler®), budesonide/formoterol fumarate (BUD/FOR) or fluticasone propionate/salmeterol (FLU/SAL), all of them as dry-powder inhaled, in the treatment of moderate to severe persistent asthma. METHODS: The efficacy data were extracted from two pivotal clinical trials between BCL/FOR vs FLU/SAL (Papi A et al. Allergy. 2007;62:1182-8) and vs BUD/FOR (Papi A et al. Eur Respir J. 2007;29:682-90). A model was designed to estimate the direct costs with a 1-year time horizon; the National Health System perspective was adopted. RESULTS: The difference between the values of the primary outcome –morning pre-dose peak expiratory flow- for BCL/FOR and FLU/SAL was 3.32 L/min (lower unilateral CI97.5%: -17.92), and 0.49 L/min (lower unilateral CI97.5%: -11.97) vs BUD/FOR, showing non-inferiority of BCL/FOR. For a 1,000 patients cohort, BCL/FOR was associated with a total cost of €1,513,208 (drug acquisition cost: €560,226) whereas FLU/SAL and BUD/FOR were with €1,581,836 and €1,622,570 (drug acquisition cost: €628,855 and €669,588 respectively). CONCLUSIONS: The analysis of available data on the new dry-powder inhaled BCL/FOR show that it is clinically as effective as BUD/FOR or FLU/SAL but would result in yearly cost savings of €68,628 for the SNS in comparison with FLU/SAL and €109,362, respect of BUD/FOR, for a 1,000 patient cohort.