Migraine Canada Position Statement

Supporting Combination Therapy for Chronic Migraine

Our Position

Migraine Canada supports the Canadian Headache Society's position that **combining onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®) with a CGRP-targeted preventive therapy** can be an appropriate treatment option for people living with chronic migraine who do not achieve adequate control with either treatment alone.

Migraine is a complex and highly individualized neurological disease. While one preventive treatment may work well for some people, others require multiple therapies to achieve meaningful improvement.

Patients should have access to the treatments they need to achieve the best possible control of their migraine.

For people living with chronic migraine, treatment success cannot be measured by headache days alone. A reduction in headache frequency may be important, but so are improvements in:

- **Pain Severity & Duration:** Reductions in attack intensity and length.
- **Functional Capacity:** Restored ability to work, attend school, and participate in daily life.
- **Interictal Burden:** Decreased fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, and residual symptoms between attacks.
- **Acute Medication Response:** Improved efficacy and reduced reliance on acute treatments.
- **Overall Quality of Life:** Meaningful gains in daily functioning and well-being.

For patients experiencing frequent and disabling attacks, every reduction in pain intensity and gain in functional capacity matters. A patient who achieves partial benefit from Botox or a CGRP-targeted therapy should not face mandatory discontinuation of that effective treatment simply because add-on therapy is required to achieve optimal control.

Individualized Treatment Matters

Combining treatments that work through different mechanisms is an established approach in the management of many chronic diseases. Migraine should be no different.

For selected patients, combining onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®) with a CGRP monoclonal antibody or an oral CGRP antagonist may provide additional benefit when one treatment alone is insufficient. Emerging evidence, clinical experience, and the updated Canadian guidelines

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support combination therapy as a treatment option for appropriately selected patients with chronic migraine.

Treatment decisions must remain grounded in individual patient response, functional goals, patient preference, and expert clinical judgment.

Insurance Policies Should Not Create an Either/Or Choice

Migraine Canada is concerned when drug coverage policies require patients to discontinue one partially effective preventive treatment before accessing another. For a patient who has finally found meaningful improvement with onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®), a CGRP-targeted therapy, or both, losing access to one treatment can mean a return of migraine disabilityand lost quality of life.

Patients should not be forced to choose between treatments that are each contributing to better disease control.

While we recognize that public and private payers must balance financial sustainability and health resource utilization, coverage policy decisions must evaluate the full economic and human burden of inadequately controlled migraine. Uncontrolled disease drives substantial costs through lost workplace productivity, increased acute healthcare utilization (including emergency department visits), and heavy personal burden on families.

Migraine Canada Recommendations

Migraine Canada calls on public and private insurers, employers, governments, and other payers to:

1. **Recognize combination therapy** with onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®)and CGRP-targeted preventive treatments as an appropriate option for selected patients with chronic migraine.
2. **Avoid automatic restrictions requiring patients to discontinue one partially effective treatment** when another is added.
3. **Support individualized, shared decision-making** between patients and their healthcare professionals.
4. **Consider meaningful patient outcomes**, including disability, functioning, and quality of life and not headache frequency alone.
5. **Provide access to combination therapy when clinically warranted**, particularly for patients who have demonstrated benefit from each treatment.

Our Commitment

People living with chronic migraine should not have to choose between partial relief and better control because of coverage policies.

Migraine Canada supports the Canadian Headache Society's call for treatment decisions that reflect evolving evidence, clinical judgement, and the needs of patients.

The goal of migraine treatment should be the best possible quality of life and not simply meeting a minimum threshold for improvement.

Better Migraine Care Now means giving patients and their healthcare professionals the flexibility to use the treatments that work.

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