Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001248

OUTCOME: 7 - Health Infrastructure, Regulation, Safety and Quality

Topic: Birmingham Hip Resurfacing Devices

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon, Nick

Question:

In the June 2013 Budget Estimates hearings I put questions on notice about Metal-on-Metal Joint Prostheses. I have again recently been contacted by a number of women who have brought to my attention shocking stories of their experiences with MoM devices, in particular the Smith and Nephew Birmingham Hip Resurfacing devices (BHR). In response to my Questions on Notice in 2013, I was provided information on MoM devices that had been withdrawn from the market. I note the Birmingham Modular Femoral Head used in total convention hip replacements was withdrawn in September 2012. Can you advise if other Birmingham Hip Resurfacing Devices are in use? a) How many people are recipients of these? b) How many have reported adverse side effects? c) How many people have required revision in earlier than expected timeframes for similar devices?

Answer:

There are two types of hip replacement in which Metal-on-Metal (MoM) components have been used:

- conventional total hip replacement where all the bone of the femoral head is replaced by the metal implant and a matching metal cup is placed in the acetabulum; and

- resurfacing total hip replacement (often just called resurfacing hip replacement) where much of the femoral head is retained and a hollow metal cap is placed over it, while a matching metal cup (similar to that used with a conventional total hip replacement) is placed in the acetabulum. It is important to note that resurfacing total hip replacements are of the MoM type in almost all cases, and that they are a suitable option for only a narrow group of patients.

The Birmingham Hip Modular Head was used exclusively in conventional total MoM hip replacements. This is the implant that was withdrawn from the Australian market after a Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) review in October 2012.

As the name implies, the Birmingham Hip Resurfacing (BHR) device is used exclusively in total resurfacing implants. The Australian Orthopaedics Association National Joint Replacement Registry (AOANJRR) reports a low rate of revision for BHR and so it remains available as a surgical option in Australia.

a) According to the AOANJRR, 10,928 BHR implants have been used in Australia between April 2000 and October 2014. The TGA does not have information about how many people have received a BHR implant as some people may have received more than one.

b) As of October 2014, there have been 624 BHR implants requiring revision. The AOANJRR recorded that 107 BHR implants have required revision due to metal related pathology (ie. MoM related) issues. Neither the TGA nor the AOANJRR has information on the numbers of patients who may be having side effects and have chosen not to have their implant revised.

c) It is not possible to say whether any of these individual revisions occurred earlier than expected because the AOANJRR data is aggregated. However, it is possible to say the risk of revision of BHR implants is among the lowest of any resurfacing implant regardless of the time that has elapsed since the date of implantation.