

# Proactive stakeholder engagement facilitates clinical adoption and utilisation of the most affordable subsidised drugs in Singapore's public healthcare institutions

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## Introduction

An effective stakeholder engagement strategy is crucial to translate national subsidy coverage changes and the improved affordability of newly subsidised drugs into clinical practice in Singapore's public healthcare institutions (PHIs).

This poster describes the proactive engagement strategy employed by the Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE) to promote the adoption of the most affordable newly subsidised drugs in PHIs.

## Methods

**Drug topic triage:** All drug topics undergoing subsidy consideration from 2022 to 2023 were triaged by reviewing ACE's health technology assessment reports and all 18 PHIs' aggregated drug dispensing data from the preceding year to identify high-expenditure topics with low or decreasing utilisation of the most affordable newly subsidised drugs or those with subsidy changes.

**Stakeholder mapping:** Stakeholders responsible for drug formulary decisions, clinical protocols development and drug inventory management were identified within each PHI.

**Targeted engagement:** Stakeholders for selected topics were engaged at least 3 months before subsidy implementation date. During these engagements, stakeholders were provided with comparisons of drug affordability to patients, analyses of their own institution's drug utilisation trends, and specific recommendations to review their institution's drug formulary listing and clinical protocols to facilitate clinical adoption of affordable subsidised drugs.

**Utilisation review:** Retrospective analysis of monthly utilisation trends one year pre- and post-subsidy implementation of the drugs within the drug topic across the PHIs were conducted.

## Results

- 12 drug topics were identified for proactive stakeholder engagement in 2022 and 2023.
- Stakeholders identified and engaged included the National Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, clinical heads of prescribing clinical specialties, pharmacy and procurement departments in relevant PHIs.
- Post-engagement analysis showed:
  - ✓ Increased utilisation of the most affordable subsidised drugs across all 12 topics.
  - ✓ Decreased or plateaued utilisation of all higher-cost alternatives in 9 topics.

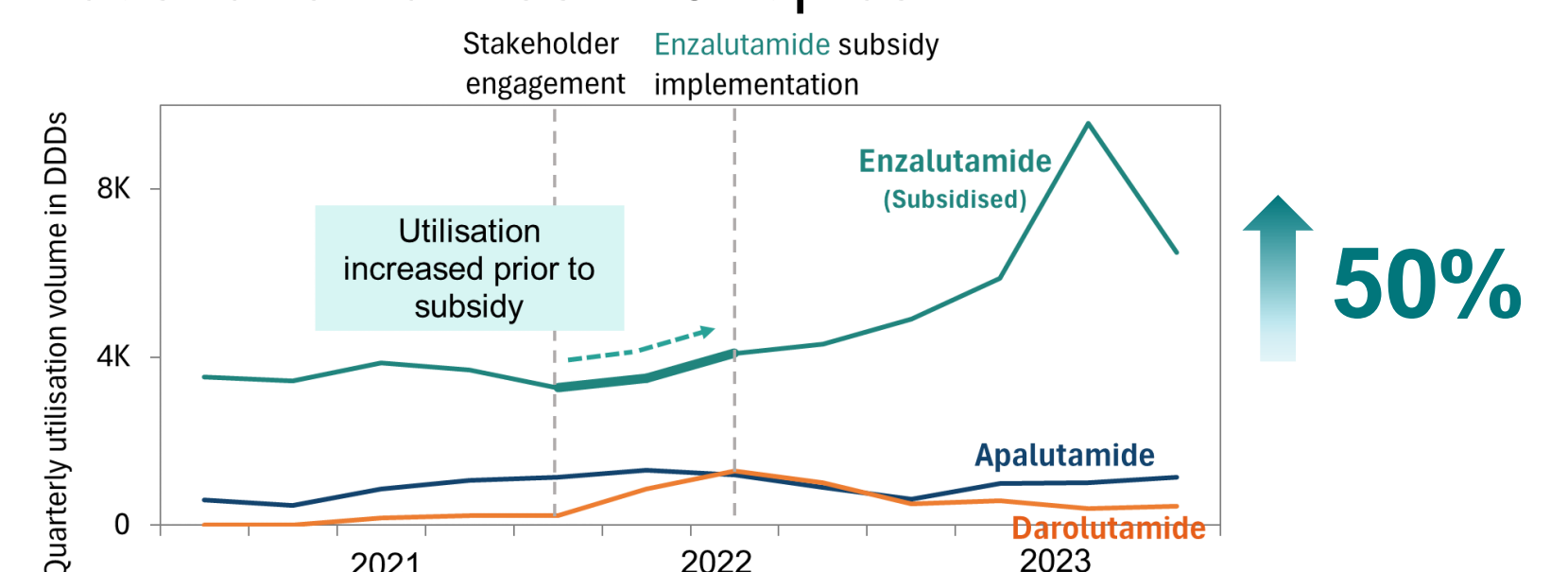


Figure 1. Utilisation trends of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation anti-androgens from 2021 to 2023

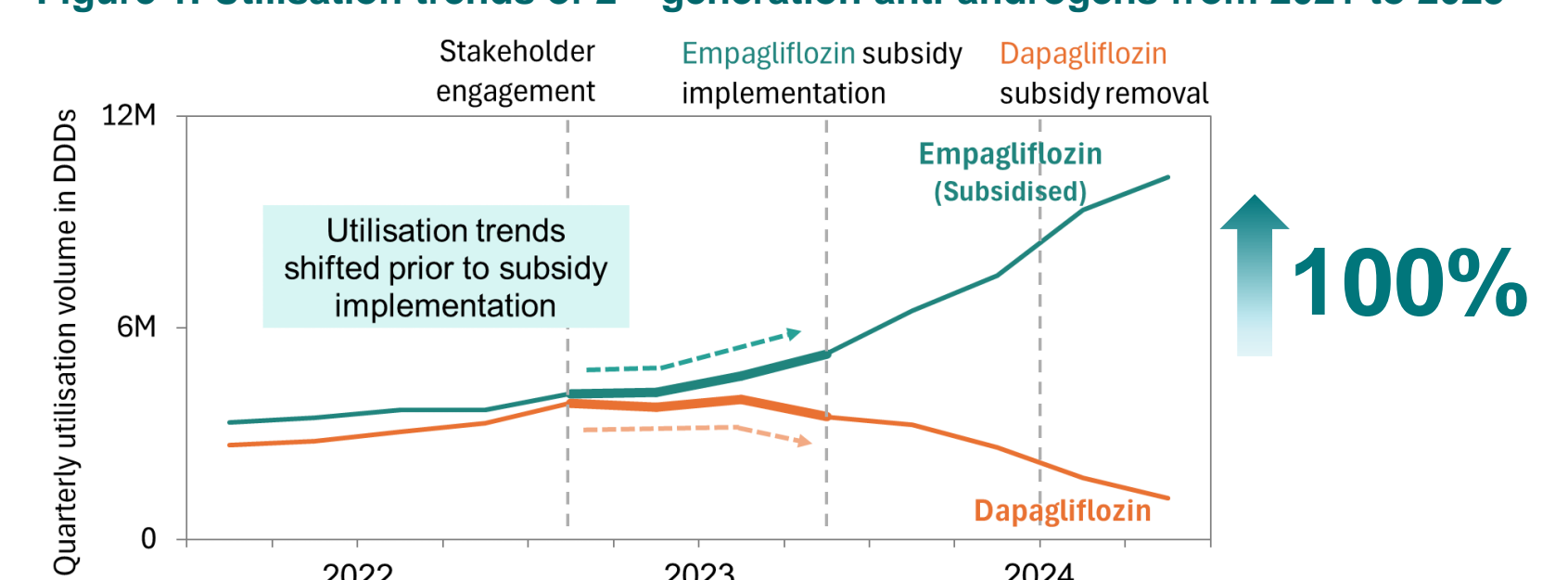


Figure 2. Utilisation trends of sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors from 2022 to 2024

## Discussion

- Singapore's complex healthcare financing system, characterised by multiple payers and tiered subsidies, presents challenges for clinicians in evaluating patient affordability differences. Sharing this information proved valuable, enabling more cost-conscious prescribing decisions and promoted intra-institution preparation and planning to facilitate adoption of affordable subsidised drugs into clinical practice in each institution.
- While the proactive engagement strategy increased utilisation of subsidised drugs, challenges persist. Some clinicians cited preference for non-subsidised alternatives due to clinical experience and familiarity with the drugs, ease of administration, safety profile differences or additional therapeutic benefits for specific patient subgroups beyond the subsidised drug's listed clinical indication. Nevertheless, the utilisation trends demonstrated adoption of the subsidised drugs into clinical practice by the majority of clinicians.

## Conclusion

Proactive stakeholder engagement before subsidy changes helps stakeholders understand implications of upcoming subsidy changes on affordability of drugs for patients and facilitates institutional planning and preparation to promote access and adoption of the most affordable subsidised drugs.