



# SASA

SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS

**SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS**

Official Group Of SAMA

Association Not For Gain

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VAT Registration Number: 4680223379

29 September 2015

## Position Statement

### The Use/ Supply of Sugammadex

For Distribution to:

- Medical Funders
- Hospital / Clinic Pharmacies
- MSD
- Members of The South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA)

During the last few months the issues of supply, availability and frequency of use of Sugammadex have been raised by some medical funders and hospital groups. The principal reason for this is the potential increase in relative costs to these parties when compared to current anaesthetic drug costs.

The current cost per ampoule of the available version of Sugammadex is approximately R830. When it is deemed necessary to use the drug for reversal of neuromuscular blockade, between 1 and 4 ampoules would be required. The current supplier of Sugammadex has provided information that indicates that the cost is approximately half of what EU, Australian and US markets are paying (taking exchange rate into account). Should all patients who currently receive “traditional” reversal of neuromuscular blockade (and who have had either rocuronium or vecuronium administered) now receive Sugammadex, the estimated total cost of anaesthetic drugs to funders could increase substantially with unrestricted use.

SASA emphasizes that Sugammadex is one of the extremely few drugs that have been realized in the anaesthesia marketplace in the last two decades. This realization of a novel agent that facilitates such a development affecting anaesthetic and surgical practice is unique. Effectively the costs of our drugs have therefore lagged compared to multiple other disciplines’ drugs and equipment costs in medicine.

After due consideration and discussion between SASA, funders and the supplier, the practical position of SASA with respect to the use of Sugammadex is as follows:



**President** | Prof BJS Diedericks **Vice President** | Dr. DHS van Zijl  
**President (Past)** | Dr. H Kluyts **Chief Executive Officer** | Ms. N Zimmelman  
**National Secretary** | Prof PJHL Fourie **National Treasurer** | Dr. R Graham



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### SASA:

1. Does not support any specified limitations with respect to the use of Sugammadex. Its use should be guided by the clinician's patient assessment and responsible use in the clinical circumstance.
2. Supports and encourages responsible, sparing use of Sugammadex limited to patients, who in the clinician's opinion:
  - a. Will benefit from the drug clinically intra/post-operatively and/or,
  - b. Will benefit from the favourable profile of reversal in the case of emergencies /difficult airways.
3. Emphasizes that the use and dose of Sugammadex should be guided by quantitative neuromuscular transmission (NMT) monitoring as a minimum for all patients (as for all patients who receive neuromuscular blocking agents). Such monitoring should be made available in all facilities where neuromuscular blocking agents are used.
4. Does not encourage the routine use of Sugammadex as it is not sustainable at the current cost in the South African context. Routine use is likely to result in limited availability and/or specified indications (limitations) to its use.
5. Advocates that the use of neostigmine and an anti-cholinergic agent for reversal of the majority of patients is still considered applicable acceptable practice for the majority of patients who ordinarily require reversal. Appropriate timing and communication between the anaesthetic and surgical team is essential.
6. Is of the opinion that SASA members will continue to practice in the best interest of their patients, both clinically and financially, to ensure sustainable excellence in the delivery of anaesthesia in their respective sectors.
7. Recommends that Sugammadex be readily available for responsible usage within all facilities where reversal of neuromuscular blockade may be required.



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SASA will continue to participate and make itself available to all stakeholders (Medical Funders, Government, Clinic/ Hospital Groups and suppliers) to discuss any concerns as actual experience of the use of the drug is realised, as well as continuing medical education with respect to the applicability and use of this novel agent.

Queries or comment may be directed to SASA at [sasa@sasaweb.com](mailto:sasa@sasaweb.com) or [ceo@sasaweb.com](mailto:ceo@sasaweb.com).

Sincerely,

Natalie Zimmelman  
Chief Executive Officer



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