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Review chief drops more hints about new-look MBS



[Rachel Worsley \(/author/rachel-worsley\)](#) 22 April 2016



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TEMPORARY MBS items may be introduced to help fund clinical trials for new treatments, according to the man tasked with overhauling the system.

MBS review chief Professor Bruce Robinson says the measure could form part of a new national research body that could replace the NHMRC.

He told delegates at the Pain Australia annual meeting this week that the proposal could plug an evidence gap for models of delivery in health care.

"We could do a trial to provide strong grounds for a health service no value... or it might be added to the healthcare system," he said.

The UK has a similar model whereby the health system contributes funds to support translating research projects into treatments.

Yet Professor Robinson stopped short of outlining how doctors may be able to take advantage of the temporary MBS items.

He said the Medicare Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) will remain the "primary gateway" for new services to be added to the MBS.

But he also flagged the possibility of "rapid reviews", conducted by the taskforce's clinical committees, to speed certain MSAC applications.

In addition, his taskforce is considering the addition of "sunset clauses" for all items in order to avoid exhaustive reviews every few decades, he said. The timeframe for such clauses is yet unclear.

Professor Robinson's comments coincide with the announcement of a second tranche of clinical committees, which are tasked with nominating outdated and redundant items.

The new committees include cardiology, endocrinology, allergy and immunology, dermatology and oncology. It will

Professor Robinson says it will take at least six months for the committees to finalise their recommendations.

The review is tasked with scrutinising some 5000 MBS items. It has presented 23 redundant items to date.

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Rachel Worsley is a reporter with Medical Observer and the Specialist Updates sister publications. She has written for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Conversation*, and was an executive producer on community radio station 2SER.

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