

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Velcade

COMPOSITION: Bortezomib 3.5mg (as a mannitol boronic ester)

PRESENTATION: Powder for solution for injection. After reconstitution, 1ml of solution for injection contains 1mg bortezomib.

ACTION: Antineoplastic agent, proteasome inhibitor.

INDICATIONS: Treatment of patients with multiple myeloma who have received at least two prior therapies and have demonstrated disease progression on the last therapy.

DOSAGE: Starting dose 1.3mg/m² body surface area administered as an intravenous injection twice weekly for two weeks (on days 1, 4, 8 and 11) followed by a 10-day rest period. See SPC for dosage adjustments.

MAJOR PRECAUTIONS: Treatment must be initiated and administered under the supervision of a physician qualified and experienced in the use of chemotherapeutic agents.

Consecutive doses should not be given less than 72 hours apart. Complete blood counts should be frequently monitored. See SPC.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Severe hepatic impairment.

SIDE EFFECTS: Include thrombocytopenia, anaemia, neutropenia, anorexia, rash and gastrointestinal disorders. See SPC.

NET PRICE: 1 vial £762.38

Contact details: Ortho Biotech, Janssen-Cilag, Sanderson, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 4HJ (tel 01494 567 567).



Sulfasalazine tablets

Sulfasalazine tablets 500mg (non enteric-coated) are now available from Alpharma; net price, 112 £7.55.

SPC CHANGES

Xenical

The summary of product characteristics for Xenical (orlistat) has been updated (Roche). The restriction of duration of treatment to two years has been

removed. The SPC now states that no interactions with amitriptyline, atorvastatin, fluoxetine, losartan, phentermine, pravastatin or sibutramine have been observed.

In patients receiving concomitant amiodarone treatment, reinforcement of clinical and ECG monitoring is warranted since a small decrease in plasma levels of amiodarone, when given as a single dose, has been observed in a limited number of cases. The SPC now states that in a four-year clinical trial the general pattern of adverse event distribution was similar to that reported for the one- and two-year studies with the total incidence of gastrointestinal related adverse effects occurring in year 1 decreasing over the four year period. The SPC states that these data suggest that weight loss achieved with orlistat delayed the development of type 2 diabetes during the study. See SPC.

Rapamune

The summary of product characteristics for Rapamune (sirolimus) has been updated and now states that co-administration of sirolimus with strong inhibitors of CYP3A4 (such as ketoconazole, voriconazole, itraconazole, telithromycin or clarithromycin) or inducers of CYP3A4 (such as rifampin or rifabutin) is not recommended (Wyeth). See SPC.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Mianserin

All strengths of mianserin tablets have been discontinued from the Alpharma range.

SUPPLY ISSUES

Ledermycin capsules

Ledermycin (demeclocycline hydrochloride) capsules 150mg x 28 are currently unavailable (Goldshield). The company expects normal supply to resume by the end of July.

Lignostab

Dentsply says there are potential delays in the supply of Lignostab A (lidocaine injection for dental use) caused by reworking of the packaging. Further details on 01932 837279 (website www.dentsply.co.uk).

Myocrisin shelf life

Distriphar says that the only stock of Myocrisin (sodium aurothiomalate) injection 20mg (40mg/ml) currently available has

a shelf life of less than six months. Customers are asked to accept the stock on a sale or return basis.

Queries should be directed to Distriphar customer services on 0870 513 3347.

Phenindone tablets

Phenindone tablets 25mg and 50mg are currently unavailable (Goldshield). The company expects normal supply to resume by the end of June. Phenindone tablets 10mg x 100 remain available from local suppliers or from Health Care Logistics (tel 01753 650099).

Stelazine spansules

Stelazine (trifluoperazine hydrochloride) spansules 2mg x 60 will be unavailable for the next six to 12 months (Goldshield). Other Stelazine presentations remain available from local suppliers or from Distriphar (tel 0870 871 0002).

Calpol and Calprofen

One litre bottles of Calpol (paracetamol) suspension have been discontinued (Pfizer Consumer Healthcare). They are replaced by prescription formats of 100ml bottles; net price, 47p. Branded prescription formats of 100ml and 150ml bottles of Calprofen (ibuprofen) suspension are also now available from Pfizer Consumer Healthcare; net price 100ml £1.69, 150ml £2.32.

PRODUCTS MISCELLANY

Rhinocort Aqua

Rhinocort Aqua (budesonide) nasal spray now comes in packs of 64µg x 120 doses; net price £4.49 (AstraZeneca). Packs of 100µg x 100 dose have been discontinued.

DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

Scottish tariff shortages

The Scottish Pharmaceutical General Council has announced that endorsements will be allowed for oxybutinin tablets 2.5mg and 5mg for May.

WANTS

Ghanaian pharmacists

The president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana would like to establish contacts with Ghanaian pharmacists practising in the UK. Further details from Ben Debrah on 07788 535925 (e-mail benjamin.debrah@kcl.ac.uk).

AWARDS

Information technology

Applications from pharmacy departments or individuals are being sought for the First DataBank/Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists information technology award. Initiatives are sought where IT has made a positive difference to the provision of pharmaceutical services or resulted in direct benefit to patients or staff. The prize is £2,500. To apply contact GHP IT interest group at awards@ghp.org.uk. Further details from Jo Goulding (e-mail jo.goulding@nhsia.nhs.uk). Deadline 1 November.

FUTURE EVENTS

Supplementary prescribing

Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Workforce Development Confederation and De Montfort University meeting entitled "Find out more about the new supplementary prescribing course", Highpoint conference centre, Glenfield Road, Leicester, 14 June and the Three Swans, High Street, Market Harborough, 15 June. Refreshments (which must be pre-booked) 6.30pm, meetings 7.30pm. Contact Claire Rashid on 0116 295 7512 (e-mail claire.rashid@nhsa.nhs.uk).

Smoking cessation

PharmacyHealthLink and the Health Development Agency conference entitled "Can pharmacists help PCTs meet their 'stop smoking' targets?", Royal Pharmaceutical Society, London, 23 June. Cost £40. Details at www.pharmacyhealthlink.org.uk (tel 020 7572 2265, e-mail info@pharmacyhealthlink.org.uk).

Manufacturing

Management Forum seminar entitled "An introduction to good manufacturing practice in the pharmaceutical industry", Harrington Hall Hotel, 22-23 June. Cost £1,233.75. Details and registration at www.management-forum.co.uk (e-mail registrations@management-forum.co.uk).

Thames Valley

Thames Valley Pharmacists Association centenary dinner, Royal Holloway College, Egham, 24 June, 7pm. Cost £35. Tickets from Mary Landers, 24 Firdene Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 9QG. Further details from David Thomas on 020 8890 8233.