

NEW MEDICINE

Tysabri

COMPOSITION: Natalizumab.
PRESENTATION: Concentrate for solution for infusion.
CLASS: Selective immunosuppressive agent.
INDICATIONS: Treatment of highly active relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (as a single disease modifying therapy) for patients with high disease activity (despite treatment with a beta-interferon) and for patients with rapidly evolving severe relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis.
DOSAGE: 300 mg by intravenous infusion once every four weeks.
CONTRAINDICATIONS: Children, adolescents and patients with progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy, increased risk of opportunistic infections (including immunocompromised patients) and known active malignancies (except for patients with cutaneous basal cell carcinoma). Tysabri is also contraindicated for treatment in combination with beta-interferons or glatiramer acetate.
PRECAUTIONS: Tysabri is not recommended for the treatment of patients aged over 65 years. Before initiation of treatment with Tysabri, a recent magnetic resonance image should be available. Patients should also be advised to inform their partners or carers about their treatment, since they may notice symptoms of which the patient is not aware and which are suggestive of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy.
SIDE EFFECTS: Common (> 1/100, < 1/10) urinary tract infection, nasopharyngitis, urticaria, headache, dizziness, vomiting, nausea, arthralgia, rigors, pyrexia, fatigue.
LEGAL CATEGORY: POM.
NET PRICE: £1,130.
CONTACT DETAILS: Biogen Idec, 5 Roxborough Way, Foundation Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3UD. Telephone 08000 286339.

SPC CHANGES

Betaferon

The summary of product characteristics for Betaferon (interferon beta-1b; Schering Health) has been updated. It now includes an additional indication for patients at high risk of developing clinically definite multiple sclerosis who have a single demyelinating event with an active inflammatory process severe enough to warrant treatment with

intravenous corticosteroids, when alternative diagnoses have been excluded. See SPC.

SUPPLY ISSUES

Harmogen tablets 1.5mg

Pfizer is currently experiencing problems supplying Harmogen (estropipate) tablets 1.5mg. The company only has stock available with an expiry date of 1 December 2006 and is therefore asking customers to keep accepting this stock until fresh supplies are received, which it expects to be in September. Further information on 01304 645262.

SQ-Pen Starter Pack

Medical House Products is currently experiencing a supply problem with the SQ-Pen Starter Pack. Further information on 0114 261 9011.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

Econac injection

Econac (diclofenac sodium; Goldshield) injection 75mg/3ml has been discontinued. Econac suppositories continue to be available. Medical information on 020 8588 9131. Customer services on 020 8588 9273.

Propaderm

Propaderm (beclometasone dipropionate; GlaxoSmithKline) cream 30g and ointment 30g are being discontinued. Further information on 0800 221441.

Zinnat

Zinnat (cefuroxime axetil; GlaxoSmithKline) tablets 125mg 50-tablet packs have been discontinued. Further information on 0800 221441.

DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

NCSOs

The Department of Health and the National Assembly for Wales have agreed to allow "no cheaper stock obtainable" (NCSO) endorsements for the following items: diamorphine injection ampoules 5mg, 10mg, 30mg, 100mg and 500mg; ketoprofen capsules 100mg; and ethosuximide capsules 250mg for July 2006 prescriptions.

AWARDS

NPPG award

The Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group and Mandeville Medicines are inviting applications for the 2006 research award and prize in paediatric and neonatal pharmacy. The £5,000 award is available to enable pharmacists or pharmacy technicians to undertake a project to improve pharmaceutical care in this group of patients. A £1,500 prize will be awarded to a pharmacist for published work (or work accepted for publication) that is judged to make the best contribution to care. Further information from Steve Tomlin on 020 7118 5049 (e-mail stephen.tomlin@gstt.nhs.uk). Closing date 1 September.

RESOURCES

DoH CD guidance

The Department of Health's interim guidance on the changes to record-keeping requirements for Controlled Drugs and its guidance on private CD prescriptions and other changes to the prescribing and dispensing of CDs are available from the publications, policy and guidance section on the DoH website (www.dh.gov.uk).

FUTURE EVENTS

RFID Smart Labels

RFID Smart Labels Europe 2006 conference, 19–20 September, London. Further information from Sarah Lee (e-mail s.lee@idtechex.com) and from the conference website (www.smartlabelseurope.com).

CORRECTIONS

Council committees

In the lists of appointments to committees of the Council of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society for 2005–06 in last week's *Journal* (p60), the Education Committee list should have included, as *ex officio* members, the Academic Pharmacy Group chairman, Chris Rostron (Liverpool John Moore University), and vice-chairman, Jenny Scott (University of Bath). In the Science Committee list, Ijeoma Uchegbu should have been described as chairman of the Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

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