

NEW MEDICINES

Isentress

COMPOSITION: Raltegravir.
PRESENTATION: Film-coated tablet.
ACTION: Integrase strand transfer inhibitor.
INDICATIONS: Treatment of HIV-1 infection in treatment-experienced adult patients with evidence of HIV-1 replication despite ongoing antiretroviral therapy, used in combination with other antiretroviral medicinal products.
DOSAGE: 400mg twice daily with or without food.
PRECAUTIONS: Isentress should be used with caution for elderly people. Safety and efficacy of Isentress have not been established for patients below 16 years of age. Isentress should be used with caution for patients with severe hepatic impairment. Patients with pre-existing liver dysfunction including chronic hepatitis are at increased risk of liver function abnormalities during combination antiretroviral therapy and should be monitored accordingly. If there is evidence of worsening liver disease in such patients, interruption or discontinuation of treatment should be considered. Patients with chronic hepatitis B or C and treated with combination antiretroviral therapy are at an increased risk for severe and potentially fatal hepatic adverse events. Cases of osteonecrosis have been reported particularly in patients with advanced HIV disease or long-term exposure to combination antiretroviral therapy. Rifampicin reduces plasma levels of raltegravir; if co-administration with rifampicin is unavoidable a doubling of the dose of Isentress could be considered.
SIDE EFFECTS: Common ($\geq 1/100$ to $< 1/10$) dizziness, vertigo, abdominal pain, flatulence, constipation, pruritus, acquired lipodystrophy, hyperhidrosis, arthralgia, fatigue, asthenia.
LEGAL CATEGORY: POM.
NET PRICE: 60 × 400mg, £647.29.
CONTACT DETAILS: Merck Sharp and Dohme Ltd, Hertford Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 9BU (tel 01992 467272).

SPC CHANGES

Enbrel

In clinical studies, concurrent administration of abatacept and Enbrel (etanercept; Wyeth) resulted in increased incidences of serious adverse events, the summary of product characteristics for Enbrel now states. The SPC warns that this combination has not

demonstrated increased clinical benefit and that its use is not recommended. The product's shelf life has increased from 18 months to two years.

Humira

Humira (adalimumab; Abbott) now has an additional indication for the treatment of moderate to severe chronic plaque psoriasis in adult patients who fail to respond to, have a contraindication to, or are intolerant to, other systemic therapy, including ciclosporin, methotrexate or PUVA. The summary of product characteristics for Humira has been updated accordingly.

Sporanox

Co-administration of nisoldipine and bepridil with Sporanox (itraconazole; Janssen-Cilag) oral solution and Sporanox IV is now contraindicated in the summaries of product characteristics for both products. Additionally, the SPCs' special warnings sections now state that reports of heart failure were more frequent with daily doses of 400mg than with lower total daily doses.

Taxotere

The head and neck cancer indication for Taxotere (docetaxel; Sanofi-Aventis) has been updated in the product's summary of product characteristics to read: "Taxotere in combination with cisplatin and 5-fluorouracil is indicated for the induction treatment of patients with locally advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck."

Zyprexa

Fatigue has been added to the list of common side effects in the summary of product characteristics for Zyprexa (olanzapine; Lilly).

PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS

Diovan

Diovan (valsartan) is now available from Novartis in 320mg capsules. Additionally, Diovan 80mg and 160mg capsules are now available in 98-capsule packs and Diovan 40mg capsules are available in 28-capsule packs; packs of seven 40mg capsules are being phased out. Net price: 28 × 40mg, £16.44; 98 × 80mg, £57.54; 98 × 160mg, £75.81; 28 × 320mg, £38.80; 98 × 320mg, £83.30. Legal category: POM.

Fostair

Fostair (beclometasone dipropionate 100µg, formoterol fumerate 6µg) pressurised inhalation solution (120-dose) is now available from Trinity-Chiesi.

Clarke Inquiry public meetings

The independent inquiry into a professional body for pharmacy — led by Nigel Clarke — has been holding a series of public meetings. People wishing to contribute to the debate can register to attend one of the three remaining events (e-mail attendance@theclarkeinquiry.com), to be held in Manchester on 21 January, Birmingham on 24 January and Newcastle on 28 January. Meeting times and venues are listed on the Clarke Inquiry website (www.theclarkeinquiry.com/publicmeetings.html).

Net price: 1 inhaler, £29.32. Legal category: POM.

Ionsys

Ionsys (fentanyl) iontophoretic transdermal system delivering 80 × 40µg doses are now available from Janssen-Cilag. Net price: 1, £62. Legal category: CD (schedule 2).

Lyrica

Lyrica (pregabalin) is now available from Pfizer in 225mg capsules. Net price: 56, £64.40. Legal category: POM.

Risperidone

Risperidone film-coated tablets are now available from Teva UK in six strengths. Net price: 20 × 0.5mg, £6.71; 60 × 1mg, £11.03; 60 × 2mg, £65.26; 60 × 3mg, £95.96; 60 × 4mg, £126.67; 28 × 6mg, £89.57. Legal category: POM.

Sumatriptan

Sumatriptan tablets are now available from Pliva in two strengths. Net price: 6 × 50mg, £17.62; 6 × 100mg, £35.24. Legal category: POM.

DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

FemTab Sequi

FemTab Sequi (estradiol valerate 2mg; estradiol valerate/levonorgestrel 2mg/75µg) tablets, 3 × 28 pack, have been discontinued by Merck Serono.

SUPPLY ISSUES

Kenalog

Bristol-Myers Squibb is experiencing difficulties supplying Kenalog (triamcinolone acetonide) pre-filled syringes 1 × 1ml and

vials 5 × 1ml. Customer services on 01244 586250.

DRUG TARIFF UPDATES

Diamorphine

The Department of Health and the National Assembly for Wales have agreed to allow "no cheaper stock obtainable" (NCSO) endorsements for diamorphine injection ampoules 5mg, 100mg and 500mg for January prescriptions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Society media campaigns

Royal Pharmaceutical Society media campaigns can be viewed online by visiting the Society's virtual press office at www.digitalnewsagency.co.uk (username rpsgb1; password rpsgb1).

RESOURCES

fpa campaign packs

Campaign packs for Contraceptive Awareness Week 2008 (11–17 February) are available free of charge from the fpa by e-mailing caw@fpa.org.uk. Further information via www.fpa.org.uk.

Premises assessment

The National Pharmacy Association has produced a guide to completing the pharmacy premises assessment tool for pharmacy contractors in Scotland. The tool must be completed by 31 March for contractors to qualify for payment. The guide is available from the members area of the NPA website (www.npa.co.uk/members).

FUTURE EVENTS

Wolverhampton lecture

Lecture on survival of meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Clostridium difficile* by Michael Brown, to be held at Millennium City Building, City Campus, University of Wolverhampton, 6 February, 6pm–7pm. The lecture is free of charge and open to the public. Further details available via www.wlv.ac.uk/events.

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