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Press Office

Press release

European Medicines Agency recommends suspension of Avandia, Avandamet and Avaglim

Anti-diabetes medication to be taken off the market

The European Medicines Agency today recommended the suspension of the marketing authorisations for the rosiglitazone-containing anti-diabetes medicines Avandia, Avandamet and Avaglim. These medicines will stop being available in Europe within the next few months.

Patients who are currently taking these medicines should make an appointment with their doctor to discuss suitable alternative treatments. Patients are advised not to stop their treatment without speaking to their doctor.

Doctors should stop prescribing rosiglitazone-containing medicines. Patients taking rosiglitazone-containing medicines should be reviewed in a timely manner to amend their treatment.

The current review of rosiglitazone by the Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) was initiated on 9 July 2010 following the availability of new studies questioning the cardiovascular safety of the medicine.

Since its first authorisation, rosiglitazone has been recognised to be associated with fluid retention and increased risk of heart failure and its cardiovascular safety has always been kept under close review. Consequently, the use of rosiglitazone was restricted to a second-line treatment and contra-indicated in patients with heart failure or a history of heart failure when it was first granted a marketing authorisation as Avandia in 2000.

Data from clinical trials, observational studies and meta-analyses of existing studies that have become available over the last three years have suggested a possibly increased risk of ischaemic heart disease associated with the use of rosiglitazone. Further restrictions on the use of these medicines in patients with ischaemic heart disease were introduced.

The availability of recent studies has added to the knowledge about rosiglitazone and overall, the accumulated data support an increased cardiovascular risk of rosiglitazone. In view of the restrictions

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already in place on the use of rosiglitazone, the Committee could not identify additional measures that would reduce the cardiovascular risk. The Committee therefore concluded that the benefits of rosiglitazone no longer outweigh its risks and recommended the suspension of the marketing authorisation of the medicines.

The suspension will remain in place unless the marketing authorisation holder can provide convincing data to identify a group of patients in whom the benefits of the medicines outweigh their risks.

The Committee's recommendation has now been forwarded to the European Commission for the adoption of a legally binding decision.

Notes

1. A question-and-answer document with more information is available on the EMA website.
2. Rosiglitazone was initially authorised as Avandia in the European Union in July 2000 as second-line diabetes type-2 treatment to be used when other treatments have either failed or are unsuitable for a patient. It was subsequently approved in combination with metformin as Avandamet and with glimepiride as Avaglim.
3. More information about Avandia, Avandamet and Avaglim is available in the European Public Assessment Report (EPAR). For Avandia, for Avandamet and for Avaglim.
4. The review of the marketing authorisations of Avandia, Avandamet and Avaglim was initiated on the request of the European Commission under Article 20 of Regulation (EC) No 726/2004, following the publication of two studies on 28 June 2010. References for the two studies are as follows: Graham DJ et al. Risk of acute myocardial infarction, stroke, heart failure, and death in elderly Medicare patients treated with rosiglitazone or pioglitazone. JAMA doi:10.1001/jama.2010.920. Nissen SE et al. Rosiglitazone revisited. An updated meta analysis of risk for myocardial infarction and cardiovascular mortality. Arch Intern Med doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2010.207.
5. This press release, together with other information on the work of the European Medicines Agency, can be found on the Agency's website: www.ema.europa.eu

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U.S. Food and Drug Administration

News & Events

FDA NEWS RELEASE

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FDA significantly restricts access to the diabetes drug Avandia
Makes regulatory decisions on RECORD and TIDE trials

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today announced that it will significantly restrict the use of the diabetes drug Avandia (rosiglitazone) to patient with Type 2 diabetes who cannot control their diabetes on other medications. These new restrictions are in response to data that suggest an elevated risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attack and stroke, in patients treated with Avandia.

“The FDA is taking this action today to protect patients, after a careful effort to weigh benefits and risks,” said FDA Commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D. “We are seeking to strike the right balance to support clinical care.”

Rosiglitazone also is available in combination with other diabetes medications, metformin under the brand name Avandamet or glimepiride under the brand name Avandaryl.

Avandia, manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), is in a class of drugs known as thiazolidinediones, or TZDs. It is intended to be used in conjunction with diet and exercise to improve glucose (blood sugar) control in patients with Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

The FDA will require that GSK develop a restricted access program for Avandia under a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy, or REMS. Under the REMS, Avandia will be available to new patients only if they are unable to achieve glucose control on other medications and are unable to take Actos (pioglitazone), the only other drug in this class. Current users of Avandia who are benefiting from the drug will be able to continue using the medication if they choose to do so.

Doctors will have to attest to and document their patients' eligibility; patients will have to review statements describing the cardiovascular safety concerns associated with this drug and acknowledge they understand the risks. The agency anticipates that the REMS will limit use of Avandia significantly.

“Allowing Avandia to remain on the market, but under restrictions, is an appropriate response, given the significant safety concerns and the scientific uncertainty still remaining about this drug,” said Janet Woodcock, M.D., director of the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

Also today, the FDA ordered GSK to convene an independent group of scientists to review key aspects of the company’s clinical trial known as RECORD, which studied the cardiovascular safety of Avandia compared to standard diabetes drugs. During the course of the FDA’s review of the RECORD study, important questions arose about potential bias in the identification of cardiovascular events. The FDA is requiring this independent review to provide additional clarity about the findings.

In addition, the agency halted the GSK’s clinical trial known as TIDE and rescinded all of the regulatory deadlines for completion of the trial. The TIDE trial compares Avandia to Actos and to standard diabetes drugs.

The FDA may take additional actions after the independent re-analysis of RECORD is completed.

For more information:

- Avandia Update[1]

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