



Health Newsflash

New Drugs Anticipated in 2005



ESI Canada actively follows the trail of new drugs coming to market in Canada. This issue provides you with a brief summary of drugs that may have an impact on employer drug plans in 2005.

In this issue, we highlighted five drugs that may be marketed in 2005.

The following drugs, biologic and chemical, have been highlighted because they represent innovations to treat various diseases.

Optimizing the Value of Drug and Dental Benefits

Insulin Delivery Systems

Many people with diabetes take insulin to control their blood sugar. People with Type 1 diabetes produce no insulin and people with Type 2 diabetes do not always produce enough insulin. Insulin products are either taken from animals such as pigs or manufactured in labs to be identical to human insulin. Insulin has recently been in the spotlight for drug development. For example, a once-daily, long-acting injectable insulin therapy called Lantus was marketed in Canada in 2004. Further, several new approaches for taking insulin are under development.

New methods of insulin delivery under investigation include inhalation, transdermal patches, oral dosage forms, and topical gels. Exubera, a dry powder inhaled insulin (see below) will likely be the first alternative insulin delivery to be marketed in Canada. These new dosage forms have been widely anticipated and will change the way diabetes is treated. These drugs are likely to cost in the hundreds to thousands of dollars per patient per year, depending on the frequency of use, and will be more expensive than injectable insulin.

Insulin Therapy

Exubera [*Ex-zoo-ber-ah*] (dry powder insulin) is a rapid-acting inhaled insulin. It is inhaled before meals, along with long-acting insulin administered by injection under the skin once or twice daily. Exubera will likely be used by patients who are currently on insulin therapy in order to reduce the number of daily injections. Studies have shown that Exubera provides similar efficacy and improved patient satisfaction when compared with standard insulin therapy alone. Premium pricing is anticipated due to its novel delivery route, however, no price has been set at the moment. Exubera is not currently available in any world market.

Schizophrenia

Abilify [*Ah-bill-ee-feye*] (aripiprazole) is a second generation atypical antipsychotic used for the treatment of schizophrenia, a chronic and debilitating mental illness which affects up to 1% of the population. Abilify is currently being used as first line therapy for schizophrenia in the United States due to its novel mechanism of action and its use will likely be similar in Canada. Abilify exhibits a more favorable safety profile compared to other available antipsychotic drugs, such as Zyprexa, Seroquel, and Risperdal. Annual drug cost is US\$3,000 to US\$5,000, which is higher compared to the drug cost of other antipsychotic medications.

Psoriasis

Raptiva [*Rap-tee-vah*] (efalizumab) is the latest biologic therapy used for the treatment of moderate to severe psoriasis. Psoriasis is a skin disease that affects approximately 2% of the population. Long term treatment is required because psoriasis is chronic and incurable. Raptiva is given once weekly by injection under the skin for a minimum of 12 weeks. Raptiva is used for patients who are intolerant and received no clinical benefit from oral therapies such as methotrexate. Raptiva's clinical effects have not been compared with Amevive, a biologic therapy which is currently marketed in Canada. The average annual drug cost for continuous treatment is estimated to be about US\$10,000 to US\$14,000 per patient.

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Organ Transplant

Certican [*Cer-tee-can*] (everolimus) is an immunosuppressant agent used in the prevention of kidney or heart transplant rejection. There are currently more than 2,000 transplant procedures each year in Canada, the majority of which are kidney and heart transplants. Transplanted organs can last for the lifetime of the recipients if no complications, such as organ rejection or infections, occur. Certican is given for the lifetime of the transplanted organ and is taken orally twice a day. Certican will likely be used along with other immunosuppressant therapy with different mechanisms of action in order to optimize therapy. No price for the drug has been set, but will likely cost in the thousands of dollars per patient per year.

Weight Loss / Smoking Cessation

Acomplia [*A-com-plee-ah*] (rimonabant) is a novel therapy being studied for weight loss and smoking cessation. It works by blocking the same physiological receptor that marijuana stimulates. Studies have shown that Acomplia is effective in weight loss, reduction in waist circumference, improvements in HDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and reduction in the prevalence of metabolic syndrome. It is also effective as a smoking cessation agent by inhibiting the nicotine-seeking behavior of smokers. Weight regain occurs with discontinuation of therapy, as is seen with other weight loss therapies. There have been no direct comparisons of efficacy with traditional agents for weight loss or smoking cessation. No price for the drug has been set, but will likely be at premium pricing because it is a new drug class.

This chart lists the drugs (alphabetically by brand name) anticipated to appear in Canada in 2005. Please note that some brand names may differ between the US and Canada.

| Brand Name (Generic Name) | Uses | Manufacturer | Annual Cost* | Potential Private Payer Market Impact** |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------|---|
| Abilify (aripiprazole) | Schizophrenia | Bristol-Myers Squibb | \$\$\$\$ | Medium to High |
| Acomplia (rimonabant) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight loss • Smoking Cessation | Sanofi-Aventis | \$\$\$\$ | Medium to High |
| Certican (everolimus) | Organ transplant rejection | Novartis | \$\$\$\$ | Low to Medium |
| Exubera (dry powder insulin) | Diabetes | Pfizer / Aventis | \$\$\$ | Medium to High |
| Raptiva (efalizumab) | Psoriasis | Serono | \$\$\$\$ | Medium to High |

* Estimated Cost Range Per Patient Per Year (Cdn\$)

\$\$\$\$: >\$1,000
\$\$\$: \$500-\$1,000
\$\$: \$100-\$500
\$: <\$100

** Potential Impact Rationale:

High – anticipated to expand market share of therapy class and cost significantly more than current therapies
Medium – anticipated to take away existing market share from other drugs in therapy class
Low – based upon prevalence of disease and existence of other standard therapies

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