



Health Newsflash

New Drugs and Indications Reviewed at the July 2003 DEC Meeting



The Drug Evaluation Committee (DEC) of ESI Canada conducts a monthly review of all new drugs receiving their Notices of Compliance from Health Canada, to ascertain their places in therapy and their possible impacts on the private payer sector. Pricing information is included when the drug is available for sale. However, availability of a drug does not immediately follow its approval by Health Canada. This issue is provided to our insurance customers as a value-added service. We hope you will find this Health Newsflash informative, timely and useful.

Redefining Health Claims Solutions

New Drugs:

For the new drugs listed below, we anticipate that they will have minimal impact on private drug plans.*

Atrovent HFA [*At-trow-vent*] (20mcg per dose ipratropium – Boehringer Ingelheim Canada) available as an inhaler is used for treating patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a persistent obstruction of the airways caused by emphysema or chronic bronchitis. The prevalence of COPD increases with age (4.6% between 55-64 years old, 6.9% over 75 years old). Atrovent HFA has the same drug component as the inhaler Atrovent, but with a CFC-free propellant to improve environmental safety. Atrovent HFA and Spiriva will replace Atrovent after January 1, 2005, when it is no longer manufactured. Atrovent HFA is administered 3 or 4 times daily, compared with once daily for Spiriva.

Concerta [*Con-cert-ta*] (18 mg, 36 mg and 54 mg methylphenidate – Janssen-Ortho Inc.) available as oral, sustained-release tablets is approved for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). ADHD causes learning disabilities and affects 3 to 5% of children. Concerta contains the same active ingredient as Ritalin and its generics; however, it has a longer duration of effect and will be useful in patients taking these drugs more than twice daily (e.g., children during the school day). Concerta is an alternative to other methylphenidate products and will probably be priced higher. The extent that Concerta will replace current therapy is unknown; therefore its utilization will be monitored throughout the year.

Repronex [*Ree-pron-necks*] (75 unit per vial menotropins – Ferring Inc.) available as an injectable solution is a hormone used as part of in-vitro fertilization programs. It can be used in combination with other products in the same way as Pergonal. It will likely be used in women to stimulate the ovaries in conjunction with in-vitro fertilization. Similar products have been used to increase sperm production in men; however, it is not an approved indication by Health Canada. Repronex can be injected under the skin or into a muscle, once daily for 5 to 12 days. Many plan sponsors restrict these agents on their drug plans using a life-time maximum.

New indications:

For the drugs listed below, we anticipate that their new indications will have minimal impact on private drug plans.*

Caelyx [*Kale-licks*] (2mg per mL liposomal doxorubicin – Schering Canada Inc.) available for injection into a vein is now indicated as monotherapy for patients with metastatic breast cancer where there is an increased cardiac risk. The current indications of Caelyx are advanced ovary cancer and the Kaposi's sarcoma, an AIDS related cancer.





Health Newsflash

New Drugs and Indications Reviewed at the July 2003 DEC Meeting

page 2



Effexor XR [*Ef-fecks-ore*] (37.5 mg, 75 mg, 100 mg and 150 mg venlafaxine – Wyeth Canada Inc.) available as oral sustained-release capsules is now indicated for treating social phobia (social anxiety disorder). Until now, Effexor XR was approved for treating depression and generalized anxiety disorders.

* Minimal impact:

1. The estimated cost of the new drug is similar to existing drugs and the new drug is likely to become one of a number of existing drugs used for the medical condition (i.e., shifting of market share) or,
2. The estimated cost of the new drug is similar to existing drugs and the new drug has low utilization due to either its place in therapy, its relation to other drugs or the prevalence of the medical condition.

**Redefining
Health Claims
Solutions**

Author: Martine Carboneau, B.Pharm, M.Sc.
Editor: Steven Semelman, Pharm.D.

Volume 5
Issue 13

Aug. 19,
2003



ESI CANADA®

www.esi-canada.com