



Health Newsflash

New Drugs and Indications Reviewed at the February 2004 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.

New Drug:

Adderall XR [*Ad-der-ahl*] (5 mg, 10 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, 25 mg, 30 mg of amphetamine) is available as oral capsules by Shire BioChem Inc. for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children 6 years of age and older. It is an extended release capsule taken once daily. ADHD mainly affects children and may cause learning disabilities. Ritalin is usually the first drug taken by children to control the disorder. Adderall XR will be a useful alternative when two or more doses per day are required to control symptoms. The cost of Ritalin SR and Adderall XR are approximately \$1.49 and \$2.75 per day, respectively (based on equivalent daily doses). Adderall XR will also compete with Concerta, a similar agent, at a daily cost of approximately \$2.73. We, therefore, anticipate the impact of this drug to be minimal.

New Indications:

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

Acular LS [*Acc-u-lar*] (0.4% of ketorolac tromethamine) is available as an ophthalmic solution by Allergan Inc., and has a new indication for the reduction of ocular (eye) pain and ocular symptoms of burning/stinging, tearing, and photophobia (fear of light) following refractive eye surgery (a type of eye surgery). Acular LS was originally indicated for the prevention and relief of eye inflammation (swelling of the eye) after cataract surgery.

Prevacid [*Prev-a-sid*] (15 mg, 30 mg lansoprazole) available as oral capsules by TAP Pharmaceuticals, Inc. has a new indication for the treatment of erosive and non-erosive gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) in children aged 1-17 years. GERD occurs when stomach contents flow back into the esophagus causing heartburn. Prevacid was originally indicated for various gastrointestinal disorders in adults only.

New Generic:

PMS-mirtazapine [*Mer-taz-a-pine*] (30 mg of mirtazapine) is available as oral tablets by Pharmascience Inc. Remeron, the brand name drug for treating depression, lost its patent in February 2004 and this generic version is now available. Remeron ranked 80th in terms of drug cost in ESI Canada's 2003 database and represented 0.21% of total drug expenditures. PMS-mirtazapine (\$0.99 per tablet-PQ price) is priced 20% lower than Remeron (\$1.24 per tablet).

**Redefining
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page 2



** Impact statements*

Minimal Impact

- 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 (shifting of market share) or,
- 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.

No impact

- New drug classified as a hospital drug or a diagnostic which has no impact in the private sector.

Redefining Health Claims Solutions

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