Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

MHRA

Early Access to Medicines Scientific Opinion - Public Assessment Report	
Product	**Efgartigimod alfa**
EAMS indication	**Efgartigimod alfa is used to treat adults with a disease causing muscle weakness, called generalised myasthenia gravis (gMG).**
Company	**argenx BV**
EAMS number	**47104/0001**
EAMS Scientific Opinion date	**27/05/2022**

Introduction
The aim of the Early Access to Medicines Scheme (EAMS) is to provide earlier availability of promising new unlicensed medicines and medicines used outside their licence, to UK patients that have a high unmet clinical need. The MHRA scientific opinion provides benefit and risk information to physicians who may wish to prescribe the EAMS medicine under their own responsibility. More information about the scheme can be found here:
http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Innovation/EarlyaccesstomedicinesschemeEAMS/index.htm

The scientific opinion is based on assessment of the information supplied to the MHRA on the benefits and risks of the medicine. As such this is a scientific opinion and should not be regarded as a medicine licensed by the MHRA or a future commitment by the MHRA to license such a medicine, nor should it be regarded as an authorisation to sell or supply such a medicine. A positive scientific opinion is not a recommendation for use of the medicine and should not be interpreted as such. Under EAMS the risk and legal responsibility for prescribing a 'special' remains with the physician, and the opinion and EAMS documentation published by the MHRA are intended only to inform physicians' decision making and not to recommend use. An EAMS scientific opinion does not affect the civil liability of the manufacturer or any physician in relation to the product.

The General Medical Council's guidance on prescribing unlicensed medicines can be found here:
https://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/14327.asp

What is efgartigimod alfa?
Efgartigimod alfa contains the active substance Efgartigimod alfa.

What is efgartigimod alfa used to treat/diagnoses/prevent?
Vyvgart is used to treat adults with generalised Myasthenia Gravis (gMG), an autoimmune disease that causes muscle weakness. gMG can affect multiple muscle groups throughout the body. The condition can also lead to shortness of breath, extreme fatigue and difficulties swallowing.

How is efgartigimod alfa used?
The treatment will be given by your doctor or other healthcare provider.
The dose you receive will depend on your bodyweight and will be administered in cycles of one infusion per week for 4 weeks. Your doctor will determine when further treatment cycles are needed.

How does efgartigimod alfa work?
Efgartigimod alfa binds to and blocks a protein in the body called neonatal Fc receptor (FcRn). By blocking FcRn, efgartigimod alfa decreases the level of IgG autoantibodies which are proteins of the immune system that attack parts of a person's own body by mistake.

In patients with gMG, IgG autoantibodies attack and damage proteins on nerves called acetylcholine receptors. Because of this damage, the nerves are not able to make the muscles contract as well as normal, leading to muscle weakness and difficulty moving. By binding to the FcRn protein and reducing autoantibody levels, efgartigimod alfa can improve the ability of muscles to contract and reduce the symptoms of the disease and their impact on daily activities.

How has efgartigimod alfa been studied?
The main study of the effects of efgartigimod alfa has enrolled 167 patients with gMG in a 26-week study. Efgartigimod alfa was administered in addition to current treatment for gMG.
The measures of effectiveness (how well the medicine worked) were the percentage of patients with a response on activities of daily living, as well as on muscular weakness or quality of life.

When should efgartigimod alfa not be given?
Efgartigimod alfa should not be given to patients who are allergic to efgartigimod alfa or any of the ingredients of this medicine.

What are the benefits and risks of efgartigimod alfa?

Benefits
Following one cycle of treatment, 68% of patients with autoantibodies who received efgartigimod alfa presented an improvement in the measurement of MG Activity of Daily Living score as compared to 30% of patients who received placebo. The evaluation of muscle weakness was also improved in 63% of patients receiving efgartigimod alfa as compared to 14.% of patients who received placebo. Similar improvement was seen after the second cycle of treatment.

Risks
The most frequent side effects, affecting at least 10% of patients treated with efgartigimod alfa were upper respiratory infections, which commonly included nasal obstruction, sore throat, tonsilitis, pharyngitis or the common cold.
Other common side effects including at least 1% of patients were urinary tract infections, bronchitis (inflammation of the airway passages), muscle pains or headache during or after administration of efgartigimod alfa.
Infusion reactions (allergic reactions) are also possible; these and serious infections, may require that treatment is stopped.

Why has efgartigimod alfa been given a positive Early Access to Medicine Scientific opinion?
Generalised Myasthenia Gravis is a serious disease affecting muscle function. Treatment options that are licensed for gMG include acetylcholine esterase inhibitors, an oral suspension of azathioprine, and Soliris that is licensed for refractory gMG.
A number of patients receiving these treatments may still require additional treatment to control their symptoms.
Therefore, there is an unmet need in a significant proportion of patients presenting with autoantibodies who do not respond adequately to currently available treatments or in whom these treatments cannot be administered due to intolerability.

What are the uncertainties?
There is little information about the treatment effect beyond two cycles or about the efficacy of efgartigimod alfa when given on its own. Also, long-term safety data beyond two years is very limited.
The company that makes efgartigimod alfa will provide additional information when it becomes available.

Are there on-going clinical studies?
The extension study for the main evaluation of efgartigimod alfa in patients with gMG is ongoing and more long-term information about the treatment will be provided by the Company when available. There is no on-going study of efgartigimod alfa in the EAMS indication.

What measures are in place to monitor and manage risks?
A risk management plan has been developed to ensure that efgartigimod alfa is used as safely as possible. Based on this plan, the company that makes efgartigimod alfa must ensure that doctors and other healthcare professionals expected to use the medicine, as well as patients, are provided with information on the medicine including the possible side effects and recommendations for minimising these side effects.

Information will be collected about patients before they enter the scheme. Healthcare professionals will be asked by the company to report side effects experienced by patients receiving efgartigimod alfa through the scheme. The company will review and report safety data collected in the scheme to the MHRA on a regular basis.

Healthcare professionals involved in the management of the scheme will receive training from the company on the product information and reporting of adverse events and pregnancies.

Patients will receive an alert card from their doctor which informs other healthcare professionals about the scheme and provides contact details for advice. Patients should carry the card with them during treatment and for at least 1 month after their last dose, so that it can be shown if they need treatment or advice from a healthcare professional who is not familiar with efgartigimod alfa treatment.

Other information about efgartigimod alfa – see EAMS Treatment Protocol