NOVARTIS

Simulect® (basiliximab): warning against off-label use in cardiac transplantation

Dear Healthcare Professional, 8th September 2014

Novartis, in association with the European Medicines Agency and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency would like to inform you of the following:

Summary

- Simulect® is indicated only for the prophylaxis of acute organ rejection in de novo allogeneic renal transplantation. No adequately powered randomised studies comparing Simulect to other induction agents or to the absence of induction therapy have been conducted in other transplant indications such as cardiac transplantation.
- Efficacy could not be demonstrated in those studies that have been conducted in cardiac transplantation, whereas there was a higher rate of serious cardiac adverse events for Simulect compared to other induction therapies.
- To reflect the lack of favourable efficacy and safety data in the available clinical trials conducted in cardiac transplantation, the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) will be updated (see Annex).

Further background information to this safety update

This communication follows a review by European drug regulatory agencies regarding the off-label use of Simulect in cardiac transplantation. In the clinical trials that have been done in cardiac transplantation, efficacy was not demonstrated and serious cardiac adverse events such as cardiac arrest (2.2 %), atrial flutter (1.9%) and palpitations (1.4 %) were observed more frequently with Simulect than with other induction agents.

Simulect is indicated for the prophylaxis of acute organ rejection in de novo allogeneic renal transplantation in adult and paediatric patients (1-17 years). It is to be used concomitantly with ciclosporin for microemulsion- and corticosteroid-based immunosuppression, in patients with panel reactive antibodies less than 80%, or in a triple maintenance immunosuppressive regimen containing ciclosporin for microemulsion, corticosteroids and either azathioprine or mycophenolate mofetil. For full prescribing information please refer to the Simulect SmPC, which can be found at http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc.

Call for Reporting

Please continue to report suspected adverse drug reactions to the MHRA through the Yellow Card Scheme. Please report

- all suspected ADRs that are serious or result in harm. (Serious reactions are those that are fatal, life-threatening, disabling or incapacitating, those that cause a congenital abnormality or result in hospitalisation, and those that are considered medically significant for any other reason.)
- all suspected ADRs associated with new drugs and vaccines identified by the black triangle ▼

It is easiest and quickest to report ADRs online via the Yellow Cards website: www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard. Alternatively, prepaid Yellow Cards for reporting are available:

- by writing to FREEPOST YELLOW CARD (no other address details necessary)
- by emailing yellowcard@mhra.gsi.gov.uk
- at the back of the British National Formulary (BNF)
- by telephoning the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) free phone line: 0800-731-6789; or
- by downloading and printing a form from the Yellow Card section of the MHRA website.

When reporting please provide as much information as possible, including information about medical history, any concomitant medication, onset, treatment dates, and product brand name. Adverse events should also be reported to Novartis on 01276 698 370 or via the following link: https://psi.novartis.com

Company contact point

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Novartis Medical Information department on 01276 698370 or email medinfo.uk@novartis.com.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Dimitrios Georgiopoulos, MD

Chief Scientific Officer, Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd

Annex

The following text shows the update to section 4.4 of the Simulect SmPC regarding off-label use in cardiac transplantation.

Section 4.4 Special warnings and precautions for use

Heart transplantation

The efficacy and safety of Simulect for the prophylaxis of acute rejection in recipients of solid organ allografts other than renal have not been demonstrated. In several small clinical trials in heart transplant recipients, serious cardiac adverse events such as cardiac arrest (2.2%), atrial flutter (1.9%) and palpitations (1.4 %) have been reported more frequently with Simulect than with other induction agents.