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▼Belimumab (Benlysta): Increased risk of serious psychiatric events (depression, suicidal ideation or behaviour, or self-injury)

Dear Healthcare professional,

GlaxoSmithKline (Ireland) Limited in agreement with the European Medicines Agency and the MHRA would like to inform you of the following:

Summary

- **An increased risk of serious psychiatric events (depression, suicidal ideation or behaviour, including suicides, or self-injury) has been observed in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) receiving belimumab plus standard therapy in clinical trials. This includes results recently obtained from a one-year, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study (BEL115467) in 4,003 patients with SLE.**

- **Prescribers should carefully assess the risk of depression, suicidal ideation or behaviour, or self-injury, taking account of the patient's medical history and current psychiatric status, before initiating Benlysta treatment.**

- **Prescribers should also monitor the patient for new signs of these risks during treatment.**

- **Prescribers should advise patients and caregivers to promptly seek medical attention in the event of new or worsening depression, suicidal ideation or behaviour, or self-injury.**

Background on the safety concern

Benlysta is indicated as add-on therapy in adult patients with active, autoantibody-positive systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) with a high degree of disease activity (e.g., positive anti-dsDNA and low complement) despite standard therapy.

Depression is listed as an adverse reaction in the Product Information of Benlysta.

At the request of regulatory authorities, a randomized placebo-controlled clinical trial (BEL115467) with the aim of evaluating all-cause mortality and pre-specified adverse events of special interest, including selected serious psychiatric events, was performed in the post-

marketing phase. The study is global and currently ongoing. The study did not exclude patients who had previous history of psychiatric/mood disorders.

One-year data have recently become available showing an increased risk for serious adverse events (SAEs) of depression and of suicidal ideation or behaviour or self-injury in patients treated with Benlysta as compared with patients treated with placebo (see table below).

**Summary of patients reporting depression or suicidality SAEs*
(As treated population, study BEL115467)**

	Number (%) of patients	
	Placebo (N=2001)	Belimumab IV 10 mg/kg (N=2002)
Number of patients reporting depression	1 (<0.1%)	7 (0.3%)
Number of patients reporting suicidal ideation or behaviour or self-injury	5 (0.2%)	15 (0.7%)

*as per study investigator report

Patients should be assessed for these risks before initiating Benlysta treatment and be monitored during treatment. Patients and caregivers should be advised to promptly seek medical attention in the event of new or worsening depression, suicidal ideation or behavior, or self-injury.

Call for reporting

Healthcare professionals are encouraged to report any adverse events to the MHRA through the Yellow Card Scheme. It is easiest and quickest to report ADRs online via the Yellow Cards website - https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/ or via the Yellow Card app available from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

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▼

Alternatively, prepaid Yellow Cards for reporting are available by writing to FREEPOST YELLOW CARD (no other address details necessary); by emailing yellowcard@mhra.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 website. Adverse events should also be reported to GlaxoSmithKline on 0800 221 441.

Benlysta is subject to additional monitoring.

Company contact point

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact GSK Medical Information Department at GSK UK Medical Information: For medical information enquiries please email ukmedinfo@gsk.com or call 0800 221 441 (option 4). 8:30am to 5:30pm GMT Monday - Friday. An out of hours service is also provided for emergencies which goes to an external provider outside of the times stated.