05 March 2014
EMA/793605/2013 rev.1
EMEA/H/A-29/1389
EMEA/H/A-29/1390

Questions and answers on Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina and associated names (tibolone, tablet, 2.5 mg)

Outcome of a procedure under Article 29(4) of Directive 2001/83/EC

On 19 December 2013, the European Medicines Agency completed an arbitration procedure following a disagreement among Member States of the European Union (EU) regarding the authorisation of the medicines Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina. The Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) concluded that the benefits of Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina outweigh their risks, and the marketing authorisations can be granted in Spain and in the following Member States of the EU: Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands.

What are Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina?

Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina are medicines that contain the active substance tibolone; they are available as tablets (2.5 mg). Tibolone is a type of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and is used to alleviate the symptoms of the menopause (such as hot flushes) in women who have not had a natural period for at least 12 months.

Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina are generic medicines based on a 'reference medicine', Liviella, which is authorised in Germany.

Why were Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina reviewed?

Aristo Pharma GmbH submitted Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina to the Spanish medicines regulatory agency for a decentralised procedure. This is a procedure where one Member State (the 'reference Member State', in this instance Spain) assesses a medicine with a view to granting a marketing authorisation that will be valid in this country as well as in other Member States (the 'concerned Member States', in this instance Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands).

However, the Member States were not able to reach an agreement and the Spanish medicines regulatory agency referred the matter to the CHMP for arbitration on 31 October 2013.

The grounds for the referral were objections raised by Germany about the data submitted to show that Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina were 'bioequivalent' to the reference medicine, Liviella. Two medicines are bioequivalent when they produce the same levels of the active substance in the body. In particular,

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Germany considered that these data were not reliable because of failings in the way the study samples were identified and registered and the cold storage and transport of the samples were recorded. This means that storage conditions could potentially have been inadequate leading to the degradation of the active substance, making the samples inadequate for testing.

What are the conclusions of the CHMP?

Based on evaluation of the currently available data and the scientific discussion within the Committee, the CHMP concluded that bioequivalence to the reference medicinal product has been shown. The company had supplied additional evidence to indicate that the study samples had been stored and maintained under adequate temperature conditions, further supported by the concentrations recorded in the bioequivalence study. The CHMP therefore concluded that the benefits of Tibolona Aristo and Tibocina outweigh their risks and recommended that the marketing authorisations be granted in the concerned Member States.

The European Commission issued a decision on 05 March 2014.