27 March 2026
EMA/70818/2026
EMEA/H/C/006475

Withdrawal of application for the marketing authorisation of Blarcamesine Anavex (blarcamesine)

Anavex Germany GmbH withdrew its application for a marketing authorisation of Blarcamesine Anavex for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and dementia (cognitive impairment).

The company withdrew the application on 25 March 2026.

The European Medicines Agency had recommended refusing the marketing authorisation in December 2025. The company had then requested a re-examination of the Agency's opinion, but it withdrew the application before the re-examination had finished.

What is Blarcamesine Anavex and what was it intended to be used for?

Blarcamesine Anavex was developed as a medicine for the treatment of adults with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

During the evaluation, the company proposed to restrict the indication to adults with early Alzheimer's disease with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) due to Alzheimer's disease or early-stage mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease, in people who do not have a mutation (change) in a gene called *SIGMAR1*. *SIGMAR1* is the gene that gives the instructions for making the sigma-1 receptor protein, which is involved in cellular processes that contribute to the health and survival of nerve cells. The medicine was to be used in addition to other treatments.

Blarcamesine Anavex contains the active substance blarcamesine and was to be available as capsules to be taken by mouth.

How does Blarcamesine Anavex work?

In people with early Alzheimer's disease, cognitive impairment is caused by a loss of nerve cells in the brain. The active substance in Blarcamesine Anavex, blarcamesine, activates the sigma-1 receptor protein. By activating the sigma-1 receptor protein, blarcamesine was expected to help nerve cells function properly and protect them from damage due to inflammation. This was expected to slow the loss of cognitive function.

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What did the company present to support its application?

The company presented results from a main study involving 462 adults aged between 60 and 85 years with early Alzheimer's disease. Patients in the study were given either Blarcamesine Anavex or placebo (a dummy treatment). The main measures of effectiveness were cognitive function and the ability to perform daily activities over 48 weeks. Cognitive function was measured using the Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale-Cognitive Subscale (ADAS-Cog13) and the ability to perform daily activities was measured using the Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study – Activities of Daily Living Scale (ADCS-ADL). The company also presented results from analyses of data from a subgroup of patients from the main study, namely adults with early Alzheimer's disease who did not have a mutation in the *SIGMAR1* gene.

How far into the evaluation was the application when it was withdrawn?

The initial evaluation had finished on 11 December 2025 and the European Medicines Agency had recommended refusing marketing authorisation. The company then requested a re-examination of the Agency's opinion, but it withdrew the application before this re-examination had finished.

What did the Agency recommend at that time?

At the time of the initial evaluation, the Agency concluded that the main study failed to demonstrate effectiveness and safety of Blarcamesine Anavex in patients with early Alzheimer's disease who do not have a mutation in the *SIGMAR1* gene.

The main study did not meet its main objective, which was to show a smaller decline in both main measures of effectiveness compared with placebo. In addition, the analysis had methodological issues which raised concerns about the validity of the results. Given the failure of the main study and the methodological issues, and based on the analysis of the data for the subgroup of patients without *SIGMAR1* mutations, the effectiveness of the medicine could not be demonstrated.

In terms of safety, limitations of the safety database and the way safety data were collected did not allow a sufficient characterisation of the safety profile of Blarcamesine Anavex. The Agency noted that a high proportion of patients stopped treatment during the main study, mainly due to side effects related to the central nervous system, which raised concerns about how well the medicine is tolerated.

Concerning quality, the Agency considered that, based on the information provided, it was not possible to rule out the formation of nitrosamine impurities (impurities that could potentially cause cancer).

In reaching its conclusion on the effectiveness and safety of Blarcamesine Anavex, the Agency acknowledged the unmet medical need for treatment of Alzheimer's disease and took into consideration the views of patients and healthcare professionals who shared their needs and experiences related to living with or treating the condition.

Although the company applied for a conditional marketing authorisation, the medicine did not meet the criteria for granting this type of authorisation. As a result, the Agency recommended refusing the conditional marketing authorisation.

What were the reasons given by the company for withdrawing the application?

In its letter notifying the Agency of the withdrawal of the application, the company stated that the withdrawal was based on the feedback received from the Agency's human medicines committee

(CHMP) indicating that, on the basis of the data provided, it would have not been possible to conclude that the benefits of the medicine outweigh its risks.

Does this withdrawal affect patients in clinical trials or compassionate use programmes?

The company informed the Agency that there are no consequences for patients in clinical trials or in compassionate use programmes with Blarcamesine Anavex.

If you are in a clinical trial or compassionate use programme and need more information about your treatment, speak with your clinical trial doctor.