News bulletin for small and medium-sized enterprises

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This news bulletin is published by the SME Office of the European Medicines Agency. It will be published three times a year.

The news bulletin aims to bring to the attention of SMEs, and their stakeholders, documents and activities related to the European regulatory environment.

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Scientific advice for human medicines

The dates of 2008 SAWP meetings and deadlines for submitting scientific advice or protocol assistance were published in June 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/SAWP/225532/2007). Future applicants are reminded to adhere to these published deadlines. Companies interested in the Parallel EMEA/FDA Scientific Advice should contact the EMEA earlier than the published deadlines (see also **Press Release** EU-FDA Regulatory Cooperation Expanded published on 18/06/07).

Pharmaceutical development

A Note for Guidance on Pharmaceutical Quality System (ICH Q10) was published on 29 May 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/ICH/214732/2007). It describes a comprehensive approach to an effective pharmaceutical quality system based on ISO concepts, includes applicable Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) regulations, and complements ICH Q8 "Pharmaceutical Development" and ICH Q9 "Quality Risk Management". Most content applicable to manufacturing sites is specified by regional GMP requirements. The content of ICH Q10 additional to current GMP requirements is optional. This guideline applies to pharmaceutical drug substances and drug products, including biotechnology and biological products, throughout the product lifecycle. It is released for consultation with a deadline of November 2007.

A document (EMEA/CHMP/CVMP/QWP/450653/2006) on assessment of the quality of medicinal products containing existing/known active substances was released on 19 July 2007. It outlines the strategy to be followed by Authorities to address common issues arising in Member States when the assessment of the quality part of products containing existing/known active substances is carried out. It is released for a 6 months public consultation period ending 31st January 2008.

A Questions and Answers document from the Joint CHMP/CVMP Quality Working Party (QWP) was released on 29 May 2007. The QWP provides recommendations to the EMEA Committees on matters relating to the quality of human or veterinary medicinal products (http://www.emea.europa.eu/Inspections/QWPfaq.html).

A draft guideline on production and quality control of monoclonal antibodies and related substances was published on 5 June 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/BWP/157653/2007). It sets out the quality requirements for monoclonal antibodies and related substances for therapeutic/prophylactic use (including ex vivo application) and in vivo diagnostic use. Requirements for monoclonal antibodies used as reagents, especially in the purification of other pharmaceutical products are also described. It replaces the guideline on "Production and quality control of monoclonal antibodies" (3AB4A) and the quality guideline on "Radiopharmaceuticals based on monoclonal antibodies" (3AQ21A). It is released for consultation with a deadline for comments by 30 November 2007.

Marketing authorisation

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) adopted a positive opinion recommending marketing authorisation for the first medicinal product evaluated by accelerated assessment. It is also the first product benefiting from specific incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Soliris, a designated orphan medicinal product, is intended to reduce haemolysis (destruction of red blood cells) in patients with paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria (EMEA/184876/2007).

Paediatric medicines

New legislation governing the development and authorisation of medicines for use in children was introduced in the European Union in January 2007. The new piece of legislation — Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006— introduces major changes into the regulatory environment for paediatric medicines, designed to better protect the health of children in the EU.

A new Section of the EMEA website was published in June 2007 to provide access to information on the Agency's work in paediatric medicines. It includes information on the new Paediatric Committee (PDCO), which held its first meeting on 4-5 July 2007 at the EMEA in London. A new electronic PIP (paediatric investigation plan) application form has been published together with a revised guidance on how to submit an application for PIP and requests for waiver and deferral.

New scientific guidelines for human medicines

A guideline on strategies to identify and mitigate risks for first-in human clinical trials with investigational medicinal products was adopted on 19 July 2007 and came into effect on 1 September (EMEA/CHMP/SWP/28367/07). It intends to assist sponsors in the transition from non-clinical to early clinical development, identifies factors influencing risk for new investigational medicinal products and considers quality aspects, non-clinical and clinical testing strategies and designs for first-in-human clinical trials. Strategies for mitigating and managing risk are provided, including the calculation of the initial dose to be used in humans, the subsequent dose escalation, and the conduct of the clinical trial. See also Press release from the workshop on first-in-man clinical trials draft guideline (EMEA/262385/2007)

A note for guidance on reporting the results of population pharmacokinetic analyses was published on 6 July 2007 (CHMP/EWP/185990/06). Guidance on the content of the analysis plan for the population PK analysis is presented and recommendations for information to be included in key sections of the report are provided. It will come into effect on 1 January 2008.

A draft guideline on non-clinical studies required before first clinical use of gene therapy medicinal products was published on 25 May 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/GTWP/125459/2006). It is released for public consultation until 23 November 2007.

A concept paper outlining the development of a guideline on clinical monitoring and follow-up of patients exposed to gene therapy medicinal products was released on 26 April 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/GTWP/367513/2006). It highlights the need for development of a guideline for the long-term monitoring of delayed adverse events as a consequence of persistent biological activity of the genetic material or other components of the gene therapy product.

A concept paper on the development of a guideline on the quality, pre-clinical and clinical aspects of medicinal products containing genetically modified cells was published on 14 June 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/GTWP/405681/2006). The guideline will focus on requirements specific to genetically modified cells including human cell-based products. It will include quality, manufacturing, non-clinical and clinical issues, as well as environmental risk assessment aspects.

A concept paper on the revision of the points to consider on xenogeneic cell therapy medicinal products was published on 30 May 2007 (EMEA/CHMP/165085/2007). It highlights the need to align the Points to Consider on Xenogeneic cell therapy products with the Guideline on human cell-based medicinal products (EMEA/CHMP/410869/2006), to reflect scientific developments and include guidance on xeno-transplantation medicinal products and tissue engineered products containing xenogeneic cells.

A Reflection Paper on the use of pharmacogenetics in the pharmacokinetic evaluation of medicinal products was published on 12 June 2007 (EMEA/128517/2006). It intends to target the place of pharmacogenetics in the clinical pharmacokinetic evaluation of medicinal products during drug development and use. Other topics include: study design and methodology, evaluation of the clinical consequences of genetic differences in drug exposure, considerations related to drug-drug interactions and impaired or immature organ functions.

Medicines and emerging science

A new section on the EMEA website has been created to highlight EMEA activities to support scientifically sound development of new therapies and technologies:

http://www.emea.europa.eu/htms/human/mes/introduction.htm

Orphan drugs

The following information was released in July 2007 for Sponsors of Orphan Medicinal Products:

- Orphan drugs and rare diseases at a glance (EMEA/290072/2007)
- General information for sponsors of orphan medicinal products (EMEA/4795/00/Rev 3)
- Procedures for orphan medicinal product designation - general principles EMEA/14222/00/Rev 3
- Update of the "guideline on format and content of applications for designation as orphan medicinal products and on the transfer of designations from one sponsor to another" (ENTR/6283/00 Rev 3).
- Practical Information for Sponsors during the early phase of an orphan drug application (EMEA/114593/2007/Rev 1)
- Template - Sponsor's report on the maintenance of the designation criteria at the time of marketing authorisation for a designated Orphan Medicinal Product (Link)

Compassionate use

A guideline on compassionate use of medicinal products, pursuant to article 83 of Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 was adopted in July 2007 (EMEA/27170/2006). Directive 2001/83/EC requires that medicinal products are authorised before they are marketed in the Community. Unauthorised medicinal products may be available through an approved clinical trial protocol. A treatment option for patients in the European Union suffering from a disease for which no satisfactory authorised alternative therapy exists or who cannot enter a clinical trial, may be the use of an unauthorised medicinal product in a compassionate use programme. Compassionate use programmes are intended to facilitate the availability to patients of new treatment options under development. National compassionate use programmes, making medicinal products available either on a named patient basis or to cohorts of patients, are governed by individual Member States (MS) legislation. See also the document "EMEA role in compassionate use" **(**EMEA/72144/2006)**.**

Medicines for veterinary use

An update of the Notice to Applicants – Veterinary Medicinal Products - Volume 6A Chapter 7 "General Information" was released by DG Enterprise and Industry on 24 May 2007 (Revision 9). The revised version provides specific information required by national authorities of Member States and EFTA States. Several changes of addresses, procedure on fee payments, languages required and on the National procedures following a Commission decision in case of a referral as well as data for Bulgaria and Romania were introduced.

An Update of the Notice to Applicants Volume 6C - Guideline on the Summary of Product Characteristics for immunological veterinary medicinal products was released by DG Enterprise on 18 June 2007 (Update).

A guideline on data requirements for immunological veterinary medicinal products intended for minor use or minor species was published on 19 July 2007 (EMEA/CVMP/IWP/123243/2006). The aim of the guideline is to define acceptable data requirements for the demonstration of quality, safety and efficacy for these products intended for minor uses. For new active substances and for those where limited information is available relating to their use in any animal species, comprehensive information relating to use in the target species will be required. It will come into effect on 1 February 2008.

Applications/Procedures for human medicines

Guidance on investigational medicinal products (IMPs) and other medicinal products used in clinical trials was released by DG Enterprise on 8 May 2007 (Link)**.** This document intends to provide additional guidance on the definition of investigational medicinal products and on the use of non-investigational medicinal products. It complements the "Detailed guidance for the request for authorisation of a clinical trial on a medicinal product for human use to the competent authorities, notification of substantial amendments and declaration of the end of the trial" and the "Detailed guidance on the application format and documentation to be submitted in an application for an Ethics Committee opinion on the clinical trial on medicinal products for human use"**.**

Updated EMEA Pre-submission guidance (Link) and Updated EMEA Post-authorisation guidance (Link) were published in July 2007.

Pharmacovigilance for human and veterinary medicines

Volume 9A of the Rules Governing Medicinal Products in the European Union: Pharmacovigilance for medicinal products for human use has been updated (Update). The guideline is divided into Volume 9A relating to medicinal products for human use and Volume 9B on medicinal products for veterinary use. Volume 9A underwent public consultations during 2005 and 2006, and the final version is now made public and takes effect immediately. Volume 9B is not yet available and therefore the version of Volume 9 that was made public in June 2004 remains valid for medicinal products for veterinary use.

Workshops

A Workshop on cell-based medicinal products organised by the EMEA and Infarmed will be held in Lisbon on 18-19 October 2007. The objective of the open workshop is to discuss with concerned stakeholders (regulators, industry, academia) scientific requirements for the authorisation of cell-based medicinal products and review the comments received on the draft guideline on cell-based medicinal products during the consultation. Link to registration form and more information http://www.emea.europa.eu/conference.htm.

A second joint EMEA/TOPRA Meeting on New Medicines Legislation will be held on 3-4 December 2007 in London. Link to registration form and more information http://www.emea.europa.eu/conference.htm.

News from European Institutions

The European Union Council of Ministers adopted the Advanced Therapies Regulation on 31 May 2007. The regulation will now need to be translated, formally adopted, signed and published. This should take a couple of months. A new multidisciplinary Committee (Committee for Advanced Therapies) will be created within the EMEA. The Committee will assess advanced therapy products and follow scientific developments in the field. The Commission will start now the implementation work with the EMEA. Further information on: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/pharmaceuticals/advtherapies/index.htm.

The European Commission published further information on the Innovative Medicines Initiative on 15 May 2007. The Innovative Medicines Initiative is a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between the pharmaceutical industry represented by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and the European Commission. The initiative's aims include overcoming research bottlenecks in the drug development process, creating real European leadership in biomedical research/development and reinvigorating the European biopharmaceuticals sector as well as benefiting patients and society in general. Research activities are to be performed through collaborative projects following open calls and peer review, with all non-profit research organisations and SMEs eligible for Community support.

Further information on: http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/imi/news-events_en.html

A public debate on the future of pharmaceuticals for human use in the Community has been launched on 19 July. Stakeholders dealing with medicines for human use are invited to participate. The Consultation Paper which forms the basis for the public consultation is available here. The document is released for comments with a deadline of 12 October 2007. Details on the consultation process are outlined in the paper.

SME companies registered with the EMEA

218 companies currently have SME status assigned by the EMEA. The list of companies is published on the EMEA website at: http://www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/SME/registeredcompanies.pdf

Contact the SME Office

The SME Office has been set up within the Agency to address the particular needs of smaller companies. The Office aims to facilitate communication with SMEs through dedicated personnel who will respond to practical or procedural enquiries, monitor applications, and organise workshops and training sessions for SMEs. Any comments on this news bulletin should also be forwarded to the SME Office:

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