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Committee for Orphan Medicinal Products

Public summary of opinion on orphan designation

Cholic acid for the treatment of inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis

First publication	23 January 2003
Rev.1: transfer of sponsorship	18 August 2008
Rev.2: information about Marketing Authorisation	7 October 2013

Disclaimer

Please note that revisions to the Public Summary of Opinion are purely administrative updates. Therefore, the scientific content of the document reflects the outcome of the Committee for Orphan Medicinal Products (COMP) at the time of designation and is not updated after first publication.

On 18 December 2002, orphan designation (EU/3/02/127) was granted by the European Commission to Agence Générale des Equipements et produits de santé - Etablissement Pharmaceutique des Hôpitaux de Paris (AGEPS - EPHP), France, for cholic acid for the treatment of inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis.

The sponsorship was transferred to Laboratoires C.T.R.S., France, in July 2007.

What are the inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis?

The bile is a fluid that helps to digest fats. Bile is made in the liver, and stored in the gallbladder. Bile contains bile acids and other substances. Most bile acids belong to one of two types. These are called cholic acid and chenodeoxycholic acid. These two acids are known as primary bile acids. Bile acids are essential for digesting certain fats. They are also needed for uptake of certain vitamins and to transport cholesterol. Certain proteins called enzymes can build up bile acids from starting materials in the liver (synthesis). In some cases, however, a person lacks the enzymes needed to build up primary bile acids. The condition may be present at birth when it is inherited via the genes from the parents. The lack of bile acids is a serious and chronically debilitating condition.

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What is the estimated number of patients affected by the condition?

At the time of designation, inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis affected approximately 0.06 in 10,000 people in the European Union (EU). This was equivalent to a total of around 2,300 people*, and is below the ceiling for orphan designation, which is 5 people in 10,000. This is based on the information provided by the sponsor and the knowledge of the Committee for Orphan Medicinal Products (COMP).

What treatments are available?

At the time of orphan designation, there was no medicinal product specifically authorised in the Community for the treatment of inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis.

How is this medicine expected to work?

It is expected that the cholic acid contained in the medicinal product can replace some of the missing bile acids.

What is the stage of development of this medicine?

At the time of submission of the application for orphan designation, clinical evaluation in patients with inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis was ongoing.

At the time of submission, cholic acid was not marketed anywhere worldwide for inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis nor was it designated as orphan medicinal product for this condition.

In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 of 16 December 1999, the COMP adopted a positive opinion on 15 November 2002 recommending the granting of this designation.

Update: Cholic acid (Orphacol) has been authorised in the EU since 12 September 2013 for treatment of inborn errors in primary bile-acid synthesis due to 3β-hydroxy-Δ^5-C_{27}-steroid oxidoreductase deficiency or Δ^4-3-oxosteroid-5β-reductase deficiency in infants, children and adolescents aged one month to 18 years and adults.

More information on Orphacol can be found in the European public assessment report (EPAR) on the Agency's website: ema.europa.eu/Find medicine/Human medicines/European Public Assessment Reports

*Disclaimer: For the purpose of the designation, the number of patients affected by the condition is estimated and assessed on the basis of data from the European Union.
At the time of designation, this represented a population of 380,600,000 (Eurostat 2002).

Opinions on orphan medicinal product designations are based on the following three criteria:

- the seriousness of the condition;
- the existence of alternative methods of diagnosis, prevention or treatment;
- either the rarity of the condition (affecting not more than 5 in 10,000 people in the EU) or insufficient returns on investment.

Designated orphan medicinal products are products that are still under investigation and are considered for orphan designation on the basis of potential activity. An orphan designation is not a marketing authorisation. As a consequence, demonstration of quality, safety and efficacy is necessary before a product can be granted a marketing authorisation.

For more information

Sponsor's contact details:

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For contact details of patients' organisations whose activities are targeted at rare diseases see:

- Orphanet, a database containing information on rare diseases, which includes a directory of patients' organisations registered in Europe;
- European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS), a non-governmental alliance of patient organisations and individuals active in the field of rare diseases.

Translations of the active ingredient and indication in all official EU languages[1], Norwegian and Icelandic

Language	Active ingredient	Indication
English	Cholic acid	Treatment of inborn errors in primary bile acid synthesis
Bulgarian	Холиева киселина	Лечение на вродени дефекти в първичната синтеза на жлъчна киселина
Czech	Kyselina cholová	Léčba vrozené primární poruchy syntézy žlučových kyselin
Danish	Cholsyre	Terapi af medfødt mangel på syntese af primærgaldesyrerne
Dutch	Cholinezuur	Behandeling van congenitale deficiëntie in de synthese van primair galzuur
Estonian	Koliinhape	Sünnipärase primaarse sapphappe sünteesi häire ravi
Finnish	Koolihappo	Primaarisen sappihapposynteesin synnynnäisen vajauksen hoito
French	Acide cholique	Traitement des déficits congénitaux de synthèse des acides biliaires primaires
German	Cholsäure	Therapie von angeborenen Synthesedefizit primärer Gallensäuren
Greek	Χολικό Οξύ	ελαττωματική σύνθεση πρωτογενών χολικών οξέων
Hungarian	Cholsav	Veleszületett primér epesav szintézis rendellenesség kezelése
Italian	Acido colico	Trattamento di errori congeniti nella sintesi degli acidi biliari primari
Latvian	Holskābe	Iedzimtu primāru žultsskābes sintēzes traucējumu ārstēšana
Lithuanian	Cholio rūgštis	Įgimtų pirminių tulžies rūgščių sintezės sutrikimų gydymas
Maltese	Cholic acid	Kura ta' żbalji mit-twelid fis-sintesi ta' l-aċidu biljari primarju
Polish	Kwas cholinowy	Leczenie wrodzonych zaburzeń pierwotnej syntezy kwasów żółciowych
Portuguese	Ácido cólico	Tratamento da deficiência congénita da síntese de ácidos biliares primários.
Romanian	Acid colic	Tratamentul anomaliilor congenitale ale sintezei primare de acizi biliari
Slovak	Kyselina cholová	Liečba vrodených porúch primárnej syntézy žlčovej kyseliny
Slovenian	Holinska kislina	Zdravljenje vrojenih motenj sinteze primarnih žolčnih kislin
Spanish	Ácido cólico	Tratamiento de la deficiencia congénita de síntesis de los ácidos biliares primarios.
Swedish	Cholsyra	Behandling av medfödd oförmåga att syntetisera primära gallsyror.

[1] At the time of transfer of sponsorship