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Human Medicines Research and Development Support Division

Public summary of the evaluation of a proposed product-specific waiver

Levomilnacipran for the treatment of stroke

On 17 April 2015, the Paediatric Committee of the European Medicines Agency refused a product specific waiver for levomilnacipran for the treatment of stroke (EMA-001724-PIP01-14).

What is levomilnacipran, and how is it expected to work?

Levomilnacipran is serotonin and noradrenalin re-uptake inhibitor. It works by preventing the neurotransmitters 5-hydroxytryptamine (also called serotonin) and noradrenaline from being taken back up into nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. This medicine is proposed in adults for the treatment of some stroke sequelae.

Levomilnacipran based medicines are not authorised in the European Union but have been authorised outside the EU in adults for the treatment of depressive disorders. Its safety and efficacy have not yet been studied in children.

What was the proposal from the applicant?

For children, the applicant proposed not to do any study in children (from birth to less than 18 years of age), because of possible lack of safety. Therefore, the applicant requested an exemption (waiver*) from the obligation to study the medicine in any children for the treatment of stroke.

Is there a need to treat children affected by stroke?

Taking into account the proposed indication in adults, and the characteristics of the medicine, the Paediatric Committee considered this medicine could be of potential use for the treatment of stroke and its sequelae in the paediatric population. This condition is very serious, occurs in children and adolescents and there are limited therapeutic choices to treat them.

What did the Paediatric Committee conclude on the potential use of this medicine in children?

The Committee disagreed with the request of the applicant to be exempt from performing studies in children and considered that if the medicine shows to work in adults, it might be potentially beneficial in the paediatric population too.

Consequently, the applicant was invited to propose a paediatric investigation plan in the future, and the PDCO adopted an opinion refusing the request of a product-specific waiver.

What happens next?

The applicant has now received the EMA Decision (P/0128/2015)* on this medicine.

As the Paediatric Committee disagreed with the request, the applicant will need to make a new proposal to the Committee, if they still intend to proceed with the development of the medicine.

***Definitions:**

Applicant	The pharmaceutical company or person proposing the Paediatric Investigation Plan or requesting the Product-Specific Waiver
Children	All children, from birth to the day of the 18 th birthday.
Paediatric investigation plan (PIP)	Set of studies and measures, usually including clinical studies in children, to evaluate the benefits and the risks of the use of a medicine in children, for a given disease or condition. A PIP may include “partial” waivers (for example, for younger children) and/or a deferral (see below).
Waiver	An exemption from conducting studies in children, for a given disease or condition. This can be granted for all children (product-specific waiver), or in specific subsets (partial waiver): for example, in boys or in children below a given age.
Deferral	The possibility to request marketing authorisation for the use of the medicine in adults, before completing one or more of the studies /measures included in a PIP. The Paediatric Committee may grant a deferral to avoid a delay in the availability of the medicine for adults.
Opinion	The result of the evaluation by the Paediatric Committee of the European Medicines Agency. The opinion may grant a product-specific waiver, or agree a PIP.
Decision	The legal act issued by the European Medicines Agency, which puts into effect the Opinion of the Paediatric Committee.
Pharmaceutical form	The physical aspect of the medicine (the form in which it is presented), for example: a tablet, capsule, powder, solution for injection, etc. A medicine can have more than one pharmaceutical form.
Placebo	A substance that has no therapeutic effect, used as a control in testing new drugs.
Active control	A medicine with therapeutic effect, used as a control in testing new drugs.
Historical control	A group of patients with the same disease, treated in the past and used in a comparison with the patients treated with the new drug.
Route of administration	How a medicine is given to the patient. For example: for oral use, for intramuscular use, for intravenous use, etc. The same medicine, or the same pharmaceutical form, may be given through more than one route of administration.
Patent	A form of protection of intellectual property rights. If a medicinal product is protected by a patent, the patent holder has the sole right to make, use, and sell the product, for a limited period. In certain circumstances, a patent for a medicinal product may be extended for a variable period by a Supplementary Protection Certificate.
Marketing Authorisation	When a Marketing Authorisation is granted, the pharmaceutical company may start selling the medicine in the relevant country (in the whole European Union, if the procedure was a centralised one).