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CPMP/074/97

CPMP POSITION STATEMENT ON HibTITER

On 17 January, 1997 the Italian Ministry of Health suspended the marketing and use of HibTITER vaccine (Hemophilus Influenzae type B) in Italy. This action was taken because of issues relating to the use of bovine brain-heart infusion agar as a preliminary step in the manufacturing process¹. On 22 January, 1997 the CPMP became aware of the Italian suspension measure. In the light of all available information, the CPMP considered the scientific and public health issues arising from the Italian action.

The product received national Marketing Authorisations in all Member States in 1993-1994 under the Concertation Procedure (Council Directive 87/22/EEC) before the establishment of the EMEA.

At its meeting on 23 January, 1997 the EMEA Secretariat and the CPMP Members obtained information concerning the use of bovine material in the manufacture of the product. It was thereby reconfirmed that all measures described in the original application are still in place. Bovine material used in the manufacture of the product is sourced from BSE free areas. Therefore, the CPMP is satisfied that in the manufacture and control of the product, the manufacturer continues to comply with the CPMP Note for Guidance on "Minimising the risk of transmitting agents causing spongiform encephalopathy via medicinal products". All manufacturers are obliged to comply with the requirements of this Note for Guidance which is kept under constant review by the CPMP.

The CPMP remains confident in the safety of HibTITER and is reassured that the manufacturing process complies with all relevant CPMP Guidelines on prevention of the risk of transmission of animal spongiform encephalopathy. In addition the CPMP acknowledges the important public health function of the product in national vaccination programmes.

¹ The bovine material is part of a solid growth substrate which is used at a very early step in the propagation of the bacteria. Prior to mass cultivation the bacteria are removed from the solid agar. This agar is therefore not part of the subsequent production steps and is consequently not an ingredient in the finished product.



EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Long established manufacturing processes have safely utilised bovine materials, primarily to promote the growth of organisms.
2. As in any manufacturing process, vaccine manufacturers are required to apply stringent quality measures to these materials to ensure their quality and safety.
3. In relation to the potential risk of transmission of animal spongiform encephalopathy, steps were taken by the European Community in the early 1990's on how to address properly this particular aspect.
4. These steps culminated in the CPMP adoption of a Note for Guidance entitled "Minimising the risk of transmitting spongiform encephalopathy agents via medicinal products". In the Note for Guidance a number of recommendations were made to avoid the risk of contamination. The Note for Guidance is followed by industry and applied by competent authorities in the evaluation of applications and in the supervision of marketing authorisations.
5. In the course of the evaluation under the concertation procedure, careful examination of materials used during the manufacture of the vaccine was carried out. This examination included a review of the certification of sourcing in accordance with the Note for Guidance.
6. Full documentation was submitted in the application including information which indicated that:
 - a) The use of the bovine material is confined to the very first step of the manufacturing process and is therefore not an ingredient of the finished product.
 - b) The bovine material is sourced from BSE free areas which were clearly identified in the application (USA and Australia). The application also made clear that the material is obtained under veterinary supervision from herds where it is ensured that there is no breeding from outside the herd.
 - c) A number of purification steps and chemical processing are included in the manufacturing process.