ANNEX I

SUMMARY OF PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS

▼This medicinal product is subject to additional monitoring. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions. See section 4.8 for how to report adverse reactions.

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

Rituzena 100 mg concentrate for solution for infusion

2. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE COMPOSITION

Each vial contains 100 mg of rituximab.

Each mL of concentrate contains 10mg of rituximab.

Rituximab is a genetically engineered chimeric mouse/human monoclonal antibody representing a glycosylated immunoglobulin with human IgG1 constant regions and murine light-chain and heavy-chain variable region sequences. The antibody is produced by mammalian (Chinese hamster ovary) cell suspension culture and purified by affinity chromatography and ion exchange, including specific viral inactivation and removal procedures.

For the full list of excipients, see section 6.1.

3. PHARMACEUTICAL FORM

Concentrate for solution for infusion.
Clear, colourless liquid.

4. CLINICAL PARTICULARS

4.1 Therapeutic indications

Rituzena is indicated in adults for the following indications:

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL)

Rituzena is indicated for the treatment of previously untreated patients with stage III-IV follicular lymphoma in combination with chemotherapy.

Rituzena monotherapy is indicated for treatment of patients with stage III-IV follicular lymphoma who are chemo-resistant or are in their second or subsequent relapse after chemotherapy.

Rituzena is indicated for the treatment of patients with CD20 positive diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in combination with CHOP (cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine, prednisolone) chemotherapy.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL)

Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy is indicated for the treatment of patients with previously untreated and relapsed/refractory CLL. Only limited data are available on efficacy and safety for patients previously treated with monoclonal antibodies including Rituzena or patients refractory to previous Rituzena plus chemotherapy.

See section 5.1 for further information.

Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Rituzena, in combination with glucocorticoids, is indicated for the induction of remission in adult patients with severe, active granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) (GPA) and microscopic polyangiitis (MPA).

4.2 Posology and method of administration

Rituzena should be administered under the close supervision of an experienced healthcare professional, and in an environment where full resuscitation facilities are immediately available (see section 4.4).

Premedication consisting of an anti-pyretic and an antihistaminic, e.g. paracetamol and diphenhydramine, should always be given before each administration of Rituzena.

In patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and CLL, premedication with glucocorticoids should be considered if Rituzena is not given in combination with glucocorticoid-containing chemotherapy.

In patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) or microscopic polyangiitis, methylprednisolone given intravenously for 1 to 3 days at a dose of 1000 mg per day is recommended prior to the first infusion of Rituzena (the last dose of methylprednisolone may be given on the same day as the first infusion of Rituzena). This should be followed by oral prednisone 1 mg/kg/day (not to exceed 80 mg/day, and tapered as rapidly as possible based on clinical need) during and after Rituzena treatment.

Posology

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Follicular non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Combination therapy
The recommended dose of Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy for induction treatment of previously untreated or relapsed/refractory patients with follicular lymphoma is: 375 mg/m^2 body surface area per cycle, for up to 8 cycles.
Rituzena should be administered on day 1 of each chemotherapy cycle, after intravenous administration of the glucocorticoid component of the chemotherapy if applicable.

Monotherapy

- Relapsed/refractory follicular lymphoma

The recommended dose of Rituzena monotherapy used as induction treatment for adult patients with stage III-IV follicular lymphoma who are chemoresistant or are in their second or subsequent relapse after chemotherapy is: 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered as an intravenous infusion once weekly for four weeks.

For retreatment with Rituzena monotherapy for patients who have responded to previous treatment with Rituzena monotherapy for relapsed/refractory follicular lymphoma, the recommended dose is: 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered as an intravenous infusion once weekly for four weeks (see section 5.1).

Diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Rituzena should be used in combination with CHOP chemotherapy. The recommended dosage is 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered on day 1 of each chemotherapy cycle for 8 cycles after intravenous infusion of the glucocorticoid component of CHOP. Safety and efficacy of Rituzena

have not been established in combination with other chemotherapies in diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Dose adjustments during treatment

No dose reductions of Rituzena are recommended. When Rituzena is given in combination with chemotherapy, standard dose reductions for the chemotherapeutic medicinal products should be applied.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Prophylaxis with adequate hydration and administration of uricostatics starting 48 hours prior to start of therapy is recommended for CLL patients to reduce the risk of tumour lysis syndrome. For CLL patients whose lymphocyte counts are > 25 x 10^9/L it is recommended to administer prednisone/prednisolone 100 mg intravenous shortly before infusion with Rituzena to decrease the rate and severity of acute infusion reactions and/or cytokine release syndrome.

The recommended dosage of Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy for previously untreated and relapsed/refractory patients is 375 mg/m^2 body surface area administered on day 0 of the first treatment cycle followed by 500 mg/m^2 body surface area administered on day 1 of each subsequent cycle for 6 cycles in total. The chemotherapy should be given after Rituzena infusion.

Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Patients treated with Rituzena must be given the patient alert card with each infusion.

The recommended dosage of Rituzena for induction of remission therapy of granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis is 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered as an intravenous infusion once weekly for 4 weeks (four infusions in total).

Pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia (PCP) prophylaxis is recommended for patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis during and following Rituzena treatment, as appropriate.

Special populations

Elderly
No dose adjustment is required in elderly patients (aged >65 years).

Paediatric population
The safety and efficacy of Rituzena in children below 18 years has not been established. No data are available.

Method of administration

The prepared Rituzena solution should be administered as an intravenous infusion through a dedicated line. It should not be administered as an intravenous push or bolus.

Patients should be closely monitored for the onset of cytokine release syndrome (see section 4.4). Patients who develop evidence of severe reactions, especially severe dyspnoea, bronchospasm or hypoxia should have the infusion interrupted immediately. Patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma should then be evaluated for evidence of tumour lysis syndrome including appropriate laboratory tests and, for pulmonary infiltration, with a chest X-ray. In all patients, the infusion should not be restarted until complete resolution of all symptoms, and normalisation of laboratory values and chest X-ray findings. At this time, the infusion can be initially resumed at not more than one-half the previous rate. If the same severe adverse reactions occur for a second time, the decision to stop the treatment should be seriously considered on a case by case basis.

Mild or moderate infusion-related reactions (IRRs) (section 4.8) usually respond to a reduction in the rate of infusion. The infusion rate may be increased upon improvement of symptoms.

First infusion

The recommended initial rate for infusion is 50 mg/h; after the first 30 minutes, it can be escalated in 50 mg/h increments every 30 minutes, to a maximum of 400 mg/h.

Subsequent infusions

All indications

Subsequent doses of Rituzena can be infused at an initial rate of 100 mg/h, and increased by 100 mg/h increments at 30 minute intervals, to a maximum of 400 mg/h.

4.3 Contraindications

Contraindications for use in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to murine proteins, or to any of the other excipients listed in section 6.1.

Active, severe infections (see section 4.4).

Patients in a severely immunocompromised state.

Contraindications for use in rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to murine proteins, or to any of the other excipients listed in section 6.1.

Active, severe infections (see section 4.4).

Patients in a severely immunocompromised state.

Severe heart failure (New York Heart Association Class IV) or severe, uncontrolled cardiac disease (see section 4.4 regarding other cardiovascular diseases).

4.4 Special warnings and precautions for use

In order to improve traceability of biological medicinal products, the tradename and batch number of the administered product should be clearly recorded (or stated) in the patient file.

Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)

All patients treated with rituximab for rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis must be given the patient alert card with each infusion. The alert card contains important safety information for patients regarding potential increased risk of infections, including PML.

Very rare cases of fatal PML have been reported following the use of rituximab. Patients must be monitored at regular intervals for any new or worsening neurological symptoms or signs that may be suggestive of PML. If PML is suspected, further dosing must be suspended until PML has been excluded. The clinician should evaluate the patient to determine if the symptoms are indicative of

neurological dysfunction, and if so, whether these symptoms are possibly suggestive of PML. Consultation with a neurologist should be considered as clinically indicated.

If any doubt exists, further evaluation, including MRI scan preferably with contrast, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) testing for JC Viral DNA and repeat neurological assessments, should be considered.

The physician should be particularly alert to symptoms suggestive of PML that the patient may not notice (e.g. cognitive, neurological or psychiatric symptoms). Patients should also be advised to inform their partner or caregivers about their treatment, since they may notice symptoms that the patient is not aware of.

If a patient develops PML the dosing of rituximab must be permanently discontinued.

Following reconstitution of the immune system in immunocompromised patients with PML, stabilisation or improved outcome has been seen. It remains unknown if early detection of PML and suspension of rituximab therapy may lead to similar stabilisation or improved outcome.

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Infusion related reactions
Rituximab is associated with infusion-related reactions, which may be related to release of cytokines and/or other chemical mediators. Cytokine release syndrome may be clinically indistinguishable from acute hypersensitivity reactions.

This set of reactions which includes syndrome of cytokine release, tumour lysis syndrome and anaphylactic and hypersensitivity reactions are described below.

Severe infusion-related reactions with fatal outcome have been reported during post-marketing use of the rituximab intravenous formulation, with an onset ranging within 30 minutes to 2 hours after starting the first rituximab intravenous infusion. They were characterised by pulmonary events and in some cases included rapid tumour lysis and features of tumour lysis syndrome in addition to fever, chills, rigors, hypotension, urticaria, angioedema and other symptoms (see section 4.8).

Severe cytokine release syndrome is characterised by severe dyspnoea, often accompanied by bronchospasm and hypoxia, in addition to fever, chills, rigors, urticaria, and angioedema. This syndrome may be associated with some features of tumour lysis syndrome such as hyperuricaemia, hyperkalaemia, hypocalcaemia, hyperphosphataemia, acute renal failure, elevated lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) and may be associated with acute respiratory failure and death. The acute respiratory failure may be accompanied by events such as pulmonary interstitial infiltration or oedema, visible on a chest X-ray. The syndrome frequently manifests itself within one or two hours of initiating the first infusion. Patients with a history of pulmonary insufficiency or those with pulmonary tumour infiltration may be at greater risk of poor outcome and should be treated with increased caution. Patients who develop severe cytokine release syndrome should have their infusion interrupted immediately (see section 4.2) and should receive aggressive symptomatic treatment. Since initial improvement of clinical symptoms may be followed by deterioration, these patients should be closely monitored until tumour lysis syndrome and pulmonary infiltration have been resolved or ruled out. Further treatment of patients after complete resolution of signs and symptoms has rarely resulted in repeated severe cytokine release syndrome.

Patients with a high tumour burden or with a high number ($\geq 25 \times 10^9$/L) of circulating malignant cells such as patients with CLL, who may be at higher risk of especially severe cytokine release syndrome, should only be treated with extreme caution. These patients should be very closely monitored throughout the first infusion. Consideration should be given to the use of a reduced infusion rate for the first infusion in these patients or a split dosing over two days during the first cycle and any subsequent cycles if the lymphocyte count is still $>25 \times 10^9$/L.

Infusion related adverse reactions of all kinds have been observed in 77% of patients treated with

rituximab (including cytokine release syndrome accompanied by hypotension and bronchospasm in 10 % of patients) see section 4.8. These symptoms are usually reversible with interruption of rituximab infusion and administration of an anti-pyretic, an antihistaminic, and, occasionally, oxygen, intravenous saline or bronchodilators, and glucocorticoids if required. Please see cytokine release syndrome above for severe reactions.

Anaphylactic and other hypersensitivity reactions have been reported following the intravenous administration of proteins to patients. In contrast to cytokine release syndrome, true hypersensitivity reactions typically occur within minutes after starting infusion. Medicinal products for the treatment of hypersensitivity reactions, e.g., epinephrine (adrenaline), antihistamines and glucocorticoids, should be available for immediate use in the event of an allergic reaction during administration of rituximab. Clinical manifestations of anaphylaxis may appear similar to clinical manifestations of the cytokine release syndrome (described above). Reactions attributed to hypersensitivity have been reported less frequently than those attributed to cytokine release.

Additional reactions reported in some cases were myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary oedema and acute reversible thrombocytopenia.

Since hypotension may occur during rituximab administration, consideration should be given to withholding anti-hypertensive medicines 12 hours prior to the rituximab infusion.

Cardiac disorders
Angina pectoris, cardiac arrhythmias such as atrial flutter and fibrillation, heart failure and/or myocardial infarction have occurred in patients treated with rituximab. Therefore, patients with a history of cardiac disease and/or cardiotoxic chemotherapy should be monitored closely.

Haematological toxicities
Although rituximab is not myelosuppressive in monotherapy, caution should be exercised when considering treatment of patients with neutrophils < 1.5 x 10^9/L and/or platelet counts < 75 x 10^9/L as clinical experience in this population is limited. Rituximab has been used in 21 patients who underwent autologous bone marrow transplantation and other risk groups with a presumable reduced bone marrow function without inducing myelotoxicity.

Regular full blood counts, including neutrophil and platelet counts, should be performed during rituximab therapy.

Infections
Serious infections, including fatalities, can occur during therapy with rituximab (see section 4.8). Rituximab should not be administered to patients with an active, severe infection (e.g. tuberculosis, sepsis and opportunistic infections, see section 4.3).
Physicians should exercise caution when considering the use of rituximab in patients with a history of recurring or chronic infections or with underlying conditions which may further predispose patients to serious infection (see section 4.8).

Cases of hepatitis B reactivation have been reported in subjects receiving rituximab including fulminant hepatitis with fatal outcome. The majority of these subjects were also exposed to cytotoxic chemotherapy. Limited information from one study in relapsed/refractory CLL patients suggests that rituximab treatment may also worsen the outcome of primary hepatitis B infections. Hepatitis B virus (HBV) screening should be performed in all patients before initiation of treatment with rituximab. At minimum this should include HBsAg-status and HBcAb-status. These can be complemented with other appropriate markers as per local guidelines. Patients with active hepatitis B disease should not be treated with rituximab. Patients with positive hepatitis B serology (either HBsAg or HBcAb) should consult liver disease experts before start of treatment and should be monitored and managed following local medical standards to prevent hepatitis B reactivation.

Very rare cases of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) have been reported during post-marketing use of rituximab in NHL and CLL (see section 4.8). The majority of patients had

received rituximab in combination with chemotherapy or as part of a haematopoietic stem cell transplant.

Immunisations
The safety of immunisation with live viral vaccines, following rituximab therapy has not been studied for NHL and CLL patients and vaccination with live virus vaccines is not recommended. Patients treated with rituximab may receive non-live vaccinations. However, with non-live vaccines response rates may be reduced. In a non-randomised study, patients with relapsed low-grade NHL who received rituximab monotherapy when compared to healthy untreated controls had a lower rate of response to vaccination with tetanus recall antigen (16% vs. 81%) and Keyhole Limpet Haemocyanin (KLH) neoantigen (4% vs. 76% when assessed for >2-fold increase in antibody titer). For CLL patients similar results are assumable considering similarities between both diseases but that has not been investigated in clinical trials.

Mean pre-therapeutic antibody titres against a panel of antigens (Streptococcus pneumoniae, influenza A, mumps, rubella, varicella) were maintained for at least 6 months after treatment with rituximab.

Skin reactions
Severe skin reactions such as Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported (see section 4.8). In case of such an event, with a suspected relationship to rituximab, treatment should be permanently discontinued.

<u>Rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis</u>

Methotrexate (MTX) naïve populations with rheumatoid arthritis
The use of rituximab is not recommended in MTX-naïve patients since a favourable benefit risk relationship has not been established.

Infusion related reactions
Rituximab is associated with infusion related reactions (IRRs), which may be related to release of cytokines and/or other chemical mediators. Premedication consisting of an analgesic/anti-pyretic medicinal product and an anti-histaminic medicinal product, should always be administered before each infusion of rituximab. In rheumatoid arthritis premedication with glucocorticoids should also be administered before each infusion of rituximab in order to reduce the frequency and severity of IRRs (see sections 4.2 and 4.8).

Severe IRRs with fatal outcome have been reported in rheumatoid arthritis patients in the post-marketing setting. In rheumatoid arthritis most infusion-related events reported in clinical trials were mild to moderate in severity. The most common symptoms were allergic reactions like headache, pruritus, throat irritation, flushing, rash, urticaria, hypertension, and pyrexia. In general, the proportion of patients experiencing any infusion reaction was higher following the first infusion than following the second infusion of any treatment course. The incidence of IRR decreased with subsequent courses (see section 4.8). The reactions reported were usually reversible with a reduction in rate, or interruption of rituximab infusion and administration of an anti-pyretic, an antihistamine, and, occasionally, oxygen, intravenous saline or bronchodilators, and glucocorticoids if required. Closely monitor patients with pre-existing cardiac conditions and those who experienced prior cardiopulmonary adverse reactions. Depending on the severity of the IRR and the required interventions, temporarily or permanently discontinue rituximab. In most cases, the infusion can be resumed at a 50 % reduction in rate (e.g. from 100 mg/h to 50 mg/h) when symptoms have completely resolved.

Medicinal products for the treatment of hypersensitivity reactions, e.g. epinephrine (adrenaline), antihistamines and glucocorticoids, should be available for immediate use in the event of an allergic reaction during administration of rituximab.

There are no data on the safety of rituximab in patients with moderate heart failure (NYHA class III) or severe, uncontrolled cardiovascular disease. In patients treated with rituximab, the occurrence of

pre-existing ischemic cardiac conditions becoming symptomatic, such as angina pectoris, has been observed, as well as atrial fibrillation and flutter. Therefore, in patients with a known cardiac history, and those who experienced prior cardiopulmonary adverse reactions the risk of cardiovascular complications resulting from infusion reactions should be considered before treatment with rituximab and patients closely monitored during administration. Since hypotension may occur during rituximab infusion, consideration should be given to withholding anti-hypertensive medicinal product 12 hours prior to the rituximab infusion.

IRRs for patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis were similar to those seen for rheumatoid arthritis patients in clinical trials (see section 4.8).

Cardiac disorders
Angina pectoris, cardiac arrhythmias such as atrial flutter and fibrillation, heart failure and/or myocardial infarction have occurred in patients treated with rituximab. Therefore patients with a history of cardiac disease should be monitored closely (see Infusion related reactions, above).

Infections
Based on the mechanism of action of rituximab and the knowledge that B cells play an important role in maintaining normal immune response, patients have an increased risk of infection following rituximab therapy (see section 5.1). Serious infections, including fatalities, can occur during therapy with rituximab (see section 4.8).Rituximab should not be administered to patients with an active, severe infection (e.g. tuberculosis, sepsis and opportunistic infections, see section 4.3) or severely immunocompromised patients (e.g. where levels of CD4 or CD8 are very low). Physicians should exercise caution when considering the use of rituximab in patients with a history of recurring or chronic infections or with underlying conditions which may further predispose patients to serious infection, e.g. hypogammaglobulinaemia (see section 4.8). It is recommended that immunoglobulin levels are determined prior to initiating treatment with rituximab.

Patients reporting signs and symptoms of infection following rituximab therapy should be promptly evaluated and treated appropriately. Before giving a subsequent course of rituximab treatment, patients should be re-evaluated for any potential risk for infections.

Very rare cases of fatal progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) have been reported following use of rituximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmune diseases including Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) and vasculitis.

Hepatitis B Infections
Cases of hepatitis B reactivation, including those with a fatal outcome, have been reported in rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients receiving rituximab.

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) screening should be performed in all patients before initiation of treatment with rituximab. At minimum this should include HBsAg-status and HBcAb-status. These can be complemented with other appropriate markers as per local guidelines. Patients with active hepatitis B disease should not be treated with rituximab. Patients with positive hepatitis B serology (either HBsAg or HBcAb) should consult liver disease experts before start of treatment and should be monitored and managed following local medical standards to prevent hepatitis B reactivation.

Late neutropenia
Measure blood neutrophils prior to each course of rituximab, and regularly up to 6-months after cessation of treatment, and upon signs or symptoms of infection (see section 4.8).

Skin reactions
Severe skin reactions such as Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported (see section 4.8). In case of such an event with a suspected relationship to rituximab, treatment should be permanently discontinued.

Immunisation
Physicians should review the patient's vaccination status and follow current immunisation guidelines prior to rituximab therapy. Vaccination should be completed at least 4 weeks prior to first administration of rituximab.

The safety of immunisation with live viral vaccines following rituximab therapy has not been studied. Therefore vaccination with live virus vaccines is not recommended whilst on rituximab or whilst peripherally B cell depleted.

Patients treated with rituximab may receive non-live vaccinations. However, response rates to non-live vaccines may be reduced. In a randomised trial, patients with rheumatoid arthritis treated with rituximab and methotrexate had comparable response rates to tetanus recall antigen (39% vs 42%), reduced rates to pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (43% vs. 82% to at least 2 pneumococcal antibody serotypes), and KLH neoantigen (47% vs. 93%), when given 6 months after rituximab as compared to patients only receiving methotrexate. Should non-live vaccinations be required whilst receiving rituximab therapy, these should be completed at least 4 weeks prior to commencing the next course of rituximab.

In the overall experience of rituximab repeat treatment over one year in rheumatoid arthritis, the proportions of patients with positive antibody titres against S. pneumoniae, influenza, mumps, rubella, varicella and tetanus toxoid were generally similar to the proportions at baseline.

Concomitant/sequential use of other DMARDs in rheumatoid arthritis
The concomitant use of rituximab and anti-rheumatic therapies other than those specified under the rheumatoid arthritis indication and posology is not recommended.

There are limited data from clinical trials to fully assess the safety of the sequential use of other DMARDs (including TNF inhibitors and other biologics) following rituximab (see section 4.5). The available data indicate that the rate of clinically relevant infection is unchanged when such therapies are used in patients previously treated with rituximab, however patients should be closely observed for signs of infection if biologic agents and/or DMARDs are used following rituximab therapy.

Malignancy
Immunomodulatory medicinal products may increase the risk of malignancy. On the basis of limited experience with rituximab in rheumatoid arthritis patients (see section 4.8) the present data do not seem to suggest any increased risk of malignancy. However, the possible risk for the development of solid tumours cannot be excluded at this time.

4.5 Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction

Currently, there are limited data on possible medicinal product interactions with rituximab.

In CLL patients, co-administration with rituximab did not appear to have an effect on the pharmacokinetics of fludarabine or cyclophosphamide. In addition, there was no apparent effect of fludarabine and cyclophosphamide on the pharmacokinetics of rituximab.

Co-administration with methotrexate had no effect on the pharmacokinetics of rituximab in rheumatoid arthritis patients.

Patients with human anti-mouse antibody or human anti-chimeric antibody (HAMA/HACA) titres may have allergic or hypersensitivity reactions when treated with other diagnostic or therapeutic monoclonal antibodies.

In patients with rheumatoid arthritis, 283 patients received subsequent therapy with a biologic DMARD following rituximab. In these patients the rate of clinically relevant infection while on

rituximab was 6.01 per 100 patient years compared to 4.97 per 100 patient years following treatment with the biologic DMARD.

4.6 Fertility, pregnancy and lactation

Contraception in males and females

Due to the long retention time of rituximab in B cell depleted patients, women of childbearing potential should use effective contraceptive methods during and for 12 months following treatment with rituximab.

Pregnancy

IgG immunoglobulins are known to cross the placental barrier.
B cell levels in human neonates following maternal exposure to rituximab have not been studied in clinical trials. There are no adequate and well-controlled data from studies in pregnant women, however transient B-cell depletion and lymphocytopenia have been reported in some infants born to mothers exposed to rituximab during pregnancy. Similar effects have been observed in animal studies (see section 5.3). For these reasons rituximab should not be administered to pregnant women unless the possible benefit outweighs the potential risk.

Breast-feeding

Whether rituximab is excreted in human milk is not known. However, because maternal IgG is excreted in human milk, and rituximab was detectable in milk from lactating monkeys, women should not breastfeed while treated with rituximab and for 12 months following rituximab treatment.

Fertility

Animal studies did not reveal deleterious effects of rituximab on reproductive organs.

4.7 Effects on ability to drive and use machines

No studies on the effects of rituximab on the ability to drive and use machines have been performed, although the pharmacological activity and adverse reactions reported to date suggest that rituximab would have no or negligible influence on the ability to drive and use machines.

4.8 Undesirable effects

Summary of the safety profile (non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia)

The overall safety profile of rituximab in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and CLL is based on data from patients from clinical trials and from post-marketing surveillance. These patients were treated either with rituximab monotherapy (as induction treatment or maintenance treatment following induction treatment) or in combination with chemotherapy.

The most frequently observed adverse drug reactions (ADRs) in patients receiving rituximab were IRRs which occurred in the majority of patients during the first infusion. The incidence of infusion-related symptoms decreases substantially with subsequent infusions and is less than 1% after eight doses of rituximab.

Infectious events (predominantly bacterial and viral) occurred in approximately 30-55% of patients during clinical trials in patients with NHL and in 30-50% of patients during clinical trials in patients with CLL

The most frequent reported or observed serious adverse drug reactions were:

- IRRs (including cytokine-release syndrome, tumour-lysis syndrome), see section 4.4.

- Infections, see section 4.4.
- Cardiovascular events, see section 4.4.

Other serious ADRs reported include hepatitis B reactivation and PML (see section 4.4.)

Tabulated list of adverse reactions

The frequencies of ADRs reported with rituximab alone or in combination with chemotherapy are summarised in Table 1. Within each frequency grouping, undesirable effects are presented in order of decreasing seriousness. Frequencies are defined as very common (≥ 1/10), common (≥ 1/100 to < 1/10), uncommon (≥ 1/1,000 to < 1/100), rare (≥ 1/10,000 to < 1/1000), very rare (< 1/10,000) and not known (cannot be estimated from the available data).

The ADRs identified only during post-marketing surveillance, and for which a frequency could not be estimated, are listed under "not known".

Table 1 ADRs reported in clinical trials or during post-marketing surveillance in patients with NHL and CLL disease treated with rituximab monotherapy/maintenance or in combination with chemotherapy

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Not known
Infections and infestations	bacterial infection, viral infections, [+]bronchitis	sepsis, [+]pneumonia, [+]febrile infection, [+]herpes zoster, [+]respiratory tract infection, fungal infections, infections of unknown aetiology, [+]acute bronchitis, [+]sinusitis, hepatitis B[1]		serious viral infection[2], Pneumocystis jiroveci	PML	
Blood and lymphatic system disorders	neutropenia, leucopenia, [+]febrile neutropenia, [+]thrombocytopenia	anaemia, [+]pancytopenia, [+]granulocytopenia	coagulation disorders, aplastic anaemia, haemolytic anaemia, lymphadenopathy		transient increase in serum IgM levels[3]	late neutropenia[3]
Immune system disorders	infusion related reactions[4], angioedema	hypersensitivity		anaphylaxis	tumour lysis syndrome, cytokine release syndrome[4], serum sickness	infusion-related acute reversible thrombocytopenia[4]
Metabolism and nutrition disorders		hyperglycaemia, weight decrease, peripheral oedema, face oedema, increased LDH, hypocalcaemia				
Psychiatric disorders			depression, nervousness,			
Nervous system disorders		paraesthesia, hypoaesthesia, agitation,	dysgeusia		peripheral neuropathy, facial nerve	cranial neuropathy, loss of other

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Not known
		insomnia, vasodilatation, dizziness, anxiety			palsy[5]	senses[5]
Eye disorders		lacrimation disorder, conjunctivitis			severe vision loss[5]	
Ear and labyrinth disorders		tinnitus, ear pain				hearing loss[5]
Cardiac disorders		[+]myocardial infarction[4 and 6], arrhythmia, [+]atrial fibrillation, tachycardia, [+]cardiac disorder	[+]left ventricular failure, [+]supraventri-cular tachycardia, +ventricular tachycardia, +angina, +myocardial ischaemia, bradycardia	severe cardiac disoders[4 and 6]	heart failure[4 and 6]	
Vascular disorders		hypertension, orthostatic hypotension, hypotension			vasculitis (predominatel y cutaneous), leukocytoclast ic vasculiti	
Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders		bronchospasm[4], respiratory disease, chest pain, dyspnoea, increased cough, rhinitis	asthma, bronchiolitis obliterans, lung disorder, hypoxia	interstitial lung disease[7]	respiratory failure[4]	lung infiltration
Gastrointesti nal disorders	nausea	vomiting , diarrhoea, abdominal pain, dysphagia, stomatitis, constipation, dyspepsia, anorexia, throat irritation	abdominal enlargement		gastro-intestin al perforation[7]	
Skin and Subcutaneous tissue disorders	pruritus, rash, [+]alopecia	urticaria, sweating, night sweats, [+]skin disorder			severe bullous skin reactions, Stevens-Johns on Syndrome toxic epidermal necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome)[7],	
Musculoskele tal, connective tissue and bone disorders		hypertonia, myalgia, arthralgia, back pain, neck pain, pain				
Renal and urinary disorders					renal failure[4]	
General disorders and administratio nsite conditions	fever , chills, asthenia, headache	tumour pain, flushing, malaise, cold syndrome, [+]fatigue, [+]shivering,	infusion site pain			

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Not known
		[+]multi-organ failure[4]				
Investigations	decreased IgG levels					

For each term, the frequency count was based on reactions of all grades (from mild to severe), except for terms marked with "+" where the frequency count was based only on severe (≥ grade 3 NCI common toxicity criteria) reactions. Only the highest frequency observed in the trials is reported

[1] includes reactivation and primary infections; frequency based on R-FC regimen in relapsed/refractory CLL

[2] see also section infection below

[3] see also section haematologic adverse reactions below

[4] see also section infusion-related reactions below. Rarely fatal cases reported

[5] signs and symptoms of cranial neuropathy. Occurred at various times up to several months after completion of rituximab therapy

[6] observed mainly in patients with prior cardiac condition and/or cardiotoxic chemotherapy and were mostly associated with infusion-related reactions

[7] includes fatal cases

The following terms have been reported as adverse events during clinical trials, however, were reported at a similar or lower incidence in the rituximab-arms compared to control arms: haematotoxicity, neutropenic infection, urinary tract infection, sensory disturbance, pyrexia.

Description of selected adverse reactions

Signs and symptoms suggestive of an infusion-related reaction were reported in more than 50% of patients in clinical trials, and were predominantly seen during the first infusion, usually in the first one to two hours. These symptoms mainly comprised fever, chills and rigors. Other symptoms included flushing, angioedema, bronchospasm, vomiting, nausea, urticaria/rash, fatigue, headache, throat irritation, rhinitis, pruritus, pain, tachycardia, hypertension, hypotension, dyspnoea, dyspepsia, asthenia and features of tumour lysis syndrome. Severe infusion-related reactions (such as bronchospasm, hypotension) occurred in up to 12% of the cases. Additional reactions reported in some cases were myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary oedema and acute reversible thrombocytopenia. Exacerbations of pre-existing cardiac conditions such as angina pectoris or congestive heart failure or severe cardiac disorders (heart failure, myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation), pulmonary oedema, multi-organ failure, tumour lysis syndrome, cytokine release syndrome, renal failure, and respiratory failure were reported at lower or unknown frequencies. The incidence of infusion-related symptoms decreased substantially with subsequent infusions and is <1% of patients by the eighth cycle of rituximab-containing treatment.

Infections

Rituximab induces B-cell depletion in about 70-80% of patients, but was associated with decreased serum immunoglobulins only in a minority of patients.

Localised candida infections as well as Herpes zoster were reported at a higher incidence in the rituximab-containing arm of randomised studies. Severe infections were reported in about 4% of patients treated with rituximab monotherapy. Higher frequencies of infections overall, including grade 3 or 4 infections, were observed during rituximab maintenance treatment up to 2 years when compared to observation. There was no cumulative toxicity in terms of infections reported over a 2 year treatment period. In addition, other serious viral infections either new, reactivated or exacerbated, some of which were fatal, have been reported with rituximab treatment. The majority of patients had received rituximab in combination with chemotherapy or as part of a haematopoetic stem cell transplant. Examples of these serious viral infections are infections caused by the herpes viruses (Cytomegalovirus, Varicella Zoster Virus and Herpes Simplex Virus), JC virus (progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)) and hepatitis C virus. Cases of fatal PML that occurred after disease progression and retreatment have also been reported in clinical trials. Cases of hepatitis B reactivation,have been reported, the majority of which were in patients receiving rituximab in combination with

cytotoxic chemotherapy. In patients with relapsed/refractory CLL, the incidence of grade 3/4 hepatitis B infection (reactivation and primary infection) was 2% in R-FC vs 0% FC. Progression of Kaposi's sarcoma has been observed in rituximab-exposed patients with pre-existing Kaposi's sarcoma. These cases occurred in non-approved indications and the majority of patients were HIV positive.

Haematologic adverse reactions
In clinical trials with rituximab monotherapy given for 4 weeks, haematological abnormalities occurred in a minority of patients and were usually mild and reversible. Severe (grade 3/4) neutropenia was reported in 4.2%, anaemia in 1.1% and thrombocytopenia in 1.7% of the patients. During rituximab maintenance treatment for up to 2 years, leucopenia (5% vs. 2%, grade 3/4) and neutropenia (10% vs. 4%, grade 3/4) were reported at a higher incidence when compared to observation. The incidence of thrombocytopenia was low (<1% , grade 3/4) and was not different between treatment arms. During the treatment course in studies with rituximab in combination with chemotherapy, grade 3/4 leucopenia (R-CHOP 88% vs. CHOP 79%, R-FC 23% vs. FC 12%), neutropenia (R-CVP 24% vs. CVP 14%; R-CHOP 97% vs. CHOP 88%, R-FC 30% vs. FC 19% in previously untreated CLL), pancytopenia (R-FC 3% vs. FC 1% in previously untreated CLL) were usually reported with higher frequencies when compared to chemotherapy alone. However, the higher incidence of neutropenia in patients treated with rituximab and chemotherapy was not associated with a higher incidence of infections and infestations compared to patients treated with chemotherapy alone. Studies in previously untreated and relapsed/refractory CLL have established that in up to 25% of patients treated with R-FC neutropenia was prolonged (defined as neutrophil count remaining below $1x10^9$/L between day 24 and 42 after the last dose) or occurred with a late onset (defined as neutrophil count below $1x10^9$/L later than 42 days after last dose in patients with no previous prolonged neutropenia or who recovered prior to day 42) following treatment with rituximab plus FC. There were no differences reported for the incidence of anaemia. Some cases of late neutropenia occurring more than four weeks after the last infusion of rituximab were reported. In the CLL first-line study, Binet stage C patients experienced more adverse events in the R-FC arm compared to the FC arm (R-FC 83% vs. FC 71%). In the relapsed/refractory CLL study grade ¾ thrombocytopenia was reported in 11% of patients in the R-FC group compared to 9% of patients in the FC group.

In studies of rituximab in patients with Waldenstrom's macroglobulinaemia, transient increases in serum IgM levels have been observed following treatment initiation, which may be associated with hyperviscosity and related symptoms. The transient IgM increase usually returned to at least baseline level within 4 months.

Cardiovascular adverse reactions
Cardiovascular reactions during clinical trials with rituximab monotherapy were reported in 18.8% of patients with the most frequently reported events being hypotension and hypertension. Cases of grade 3 or 4 arrhythmia (including ventricular and supraventricular tachycardia) and angina pectoris during infusion were reported. During maintenance treatment, the incidence of grade 3/4 cardiac disorders was comparable between patients treated with rituximab and observation. Cardiac events were reported as serious adverse events (including atrial fibrillation, myocardial infarction, left ventricular failure, myocardial ischaemia) in 3% of patients treated with rituximab compared to <1% on observation. In studies evaluating rituximab in combination with chemotherapy, the incidence of grade 3 and 4 cardiac arrhythmias, predominantly supraventricular arrhythmias such as tachycardia and atrial flutter/fibrillation, was higher in the R-CHOP group (14 patients, 6.9%) as compared to the CHOP group (3 patients, 1.5%). All of these arrhythmias either occurred in the context of a rituximab infusion or were associated with predisposing conditions such as fever, infection, acute myocardial infarction or pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular disease. No difference between the R-CHOP and CHOP group was observed in the incidence of other grade 3 and 4 cardiac events including heart failure, myocardial disease and manifestations of coronary artery disease. In CLL, the overall incidence of grade 3 or 4 cardiac disorders was low both in the first-line study (4% R-FC, 3% FC) and in the relapsed/refractory study (4% R-FC, 4% FC).

Respiratory system

Cases of interstitial lung disease, some with fatal outcome, have been reported.

Neurologic disorders
During the treatment period (induction treatment phase comprising of R-CHOP for at most eight cycles), four patients (2 %) treated with R-CHOP, all with cardiovascular risk factors, experienced thromboembolic cerebrovascular accidents during the first treatment cycle. There was no difference between the treatment groups in the incidence of other thromboembolic events. In contrast, three patients (1.5 %) had cerebrovascular events in the CHOP group, all of which occurred during the follow-up period. In CLL, the overall incidence of grade 3 or 4 nervous system disorders was low both in the first-line study (4% R-FC, 4% FC) and in the relapsed/refractory study (3% R-FC, 3% FC).

Cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) / reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS) have been reported. Signs and symptoms included visual disturbance, headache, seizures and altered mental status, with or without associated hypertension. A diagnosis of PRES/RPLS requires confirmation by brain imaging. The reported cases had recognised risk factors for PRES/RPLS, including the patients' underlying disease, hypertension, immunosuppressive therapy and/or chemotherapy.

Gastrointestinal disorders
Gastrointestinal perforation in some cases leading to death has been observed in patients receiving rituximab for treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In the majority of these cases, rituximab was administered with chemotherapy.

IgG levels
In the clinical trial evaluating rituximab maintenance treatment in relapsed/refractory follicular lymphoma, median IgG levels were below the lower limit of normal (LLN) (<7 g/L) after induction treatment in both the observation and the rituximab groups. In the observation group, the median IgG level subsequently increased to above the LLN, but remained constant in the rituximab group. The proportion of patients with IgG levels below the LLN was about 60% in the rituximab group throughout the 2 year treatment period, while it decreased in the observation group (36% after 2 years).

A small number of spontaneous and literature cases of hypogammaglobulinaemia have been observed in paediatric patients treated with rituximab, in some cases severe and requiring long-term immunoglobulin substitution therapy. The consequences of long term B cell depletion in paediatric patients are unknown.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders
Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported very rarely.

Patient subpopulations - rituximab monotherapy
Elderly patients (≥ 65 years):
The incidence of ADRs of all grades and grade 3 /4 ADR was similar in elderly patients compared to younger patients (<65 years).

Bulky disease
There was a higher incidence of grade 3/4 ADRs in patients with bulky disease than in patients without bulky disease (25.6 % vs. 15.4 %). The incidence of ADRs of any grade was similar in these two groups.

Re-treatment
The percentage of patients reporting ADRs upon re-treatment with further courses of rituximab was similar to the percentage of patients reporting ADRs upon initial exposure (any grade and grade 3/4 ADRs).

Patient subpopulations - rituximab combination therapy
Elderly patients (≥ 65 years)
The incidence of grade 3/4 blood and lymphatic adverse events was higher in elderly patients compared to younger patients (<65 years), with previously untreated or relapsed/refractory CLL.

Summary of the safety profile (rheumatoid arthritis)

The overall safety profile of rituximab in rheumatoid arthritis is based on data from patients from clinical trials and from post-marketing surveillance.

The safety profile of rituximab in patients with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is summarised in the sections below. In clinical trials more than 3,100 patients received at least one treatment course and were followed for periods ranging from 6 months to over 5 years; approximately 2,400 patients received two or more courses of treatment with over 1,000 having received 5 or more courses. The safety information collected during post-marketing experience reflects the expected adverse reaction profile as seen in clinical trials for rituximab (see section 4.4).

Patients received 2 x 1,000 mg of rituximab separated by an interval of two weeks, in addition to methotrexate (10-25 mg/week). Rituximab infusions were administered after an intravenous infusion of 100 mg methylprednisolone; patients also received treatment with oral prednisone for 15 days.

Tabulated list of adverse reactions

Frequencies are defined as very common (≥1/10), common (≥1/100 to <1/10), uncommon (≥1/1,000 to <1/100) and very rare (<1/10,000). Within each frequency grouping, undesirable effects are presented in order of decreasing seriousness.

The most frequent adverse reactions considered due to receipt of rituximab were IRRs. The overall incidence of IRRs in clinical trials was 23% with the first infusion and decreased with subsequent infusions. Serious IRRs were uncommon (1.5% of patients) and were predominantly seen during the initial course. In addition to adverse reactions seen in RA clinical trials for rituximab, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) (see section 4.4) and serum sickness-like reaction have been reported during post marketing experience.

Table 2 Summary of adverse drug reactions reported in clinical trials or during post marketing surveillance occurring in patients with rheumatoid arthritis receiving rituximab

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very rare
Infections and infestations	upper respiratory tract infection, urinary tract infections	bronchitis, sinusitis, gastroenteritis, tinea pedis			PML, reactivation of hepatitis B
Blood and lymphatic system disorders		neutropenia[1]		late neutropenia[2]	serum sickness-like reaction
Immune system disorders	[3]infusion related reactions (hypertension, nausea, rash,		[3]infusion related reactions (generalised oedema,		

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very rare
General disorders and administration site conditions	pyrexia, pruritus, urticaria, throat irritation, hot flush, hypotension, rhinitis, rigors, tachycardia, fatigue, oropharyngeal pain, peripheral oedema, erythma)		bronchospasm, wheezing, laryngeal oedema, angioneurotic oedema, generalised pruritis, anaphylaxis, anaphylactoid reaction)		
Metabolism and nutritional Disorders		hypercholesterolemia			
Psychiatric disorders		depression, anxiety			
Nervous system disorders	headache	paraesthesia, migraine, dizziness, sciatica			
Cardiac disorders				angina pectoris, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, myocardial infarction	atrial flutter
Gastrointestinal disorders		dyspepsia, diarrhoea, gastro-oesophageal reflux, mouth ulceration, upper abdominal pain			
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders		alopecia			toxic epidermal necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome), Stevens-Johnson Syndrome[5]
Musculo-skeletal disorders		arthralgia / musculoskeletal pain, osteoarthritis, bursitis			
Investigations	decreased IgM levels[4]	decreased IgG levels[4]			

[1] Frequency category derived from laboratory values collected as part of routine laboratory monitoring in clinical trials
[2] Frequency category derived from post-marketing data.
[3] Reactions occurring during or within 24 hours of infusion. See also infusion-related reactions below. IRRs may occur as a result of hypersensitivity and/or to the mechanism of action.
[4] Includes observations collected as part of routine laboratory monitoring.
[5] Includes fatal cases

Description of selected adverse reactions

Multiple courses

Multiple courses of treatment are associated with a similar ADR profile to that observed following first exposure. The rate of all ADRs following first rituximab exposure was highest during the first 6 months and declined thereafter. This is mostly accounted for by IRRs (most frequent during the first treatment course), RA exacerbation and infections all of which were more frequent in the first 6 months of treatment.

Infusion-related reactions
The most frequent ADRs following receipt of rituximab in clinical studies were IRRs. Among the 3189 patients treated with rituximab, 1,135 (36%) experienced at least one IRR with 733/3,189 (23%) of patients experiencing an IRR following first infusion of the first exposure to rituximab. The incidence of IRRs declined with subsequent infusions. In clinical trials fewer than 1% (17/3189) of patients experienced a serious IRR. There were no CTC Grade 4 IRRs and no deaths due to IRRs in the clinical trials. The proportion of CTC Grade 3 events, and of IRRs leading to withdrawal decreased by course and were rare from course 3 onwards. Premedication with intravenous glucocorticoid significantly reduced the incidence and severity of IRRs (see sections 4.2 and 4.4). Severe IRRs with fatal outcome have been reported in the postmarketing setting.

In a trial designed to evaluate the safety of a more rapid rituximab infusion in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, patients with moderate-to-severe active RA who did not experience a serious IRR during or within 24 hours of their first studied infusion were allowed to receive a 2 hour intravenous infusion of rituximab. Patients with a history of a serious infusion reaction to a biologic therapy for RA were excluded from entry. The incidence, types and severity of IRRs were consistent with that observed historically. No serious IRRs were observed.

Infections
The overall rate of infection was approximately 94 per 100 patient years in rituximab treated patients. The infections were predominately mild to moderate and consisted mostly of upper respiratory tract infections and urinary tract infections. The incidence of infections that were serious or required IV antibiotics, was approximately 4 per 100 patient years. The rate of serious infections did not show any significant increase following multiple courses of rituximab. Lower respiratory tract infections (including pneumonia) have been reported during clinical trials, at a similar incidence in the rituximab-arms compared to control arms.

Cases of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy with fatal outcome have been reported following use of rituximab for the treatment of autoimmune diseases. This includes rheumatoid arthritis and off-label autoimmune diseases, including Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) and vasculitis.

In patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma receiving rituximab in combination with cytotoxic chemotherapy, cases of hepatitis B reactivation have been reported (see non-Hodgkin's lymphoma). Reactivation of hepatitis B infection has also been very rarely reported in rheumatoid arthritis patients receiving rituximab (see section 4.4).

Cardiovascular adverse reactions
Serious cardiac reactions were reported at a rate of 1.3 per 100 patient years in the rituximab treated patients compared to 1.3 per 100 patient years in placebo treated patients. The proportions of patients experiencing cardiac reactions (all or serious) did not increase over multiple courses.

Neurologic events
Cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS) have been reported. Signs and symptoms included visual disturbance, headache, seizures and altered mental status, with or without associated hypertension. A diagnosis of PRES/RPLS requires confirmation by brain imaging. The reported cases had recognised risk factors for PRES/RPLS, including the patients' underlying disease, hypertension, immunosuppressive therapy and/or chemotherapy.

Neutropenia
Events of neutropenia were observed with rituximab treatment, the majority of which were transient and mild or moderate in severity. Neutropenia can occur several months after the administration of rituximab (see section 4.4).

In placebo-controlled periods of clinical trials, 0.94% (13/1382) of rituximab treated patients and

0.27% (2/731) of placebo-treated patients developed severe neutropenia.

Neutropenic events, including severe late onset and persistent neutropenia, have been rarely reported in the post-marketing setting, some of which were associated with fatal infections.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders
Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported very rarely.

Laboratory abnormalities
Hypogammaglobulinaemia (IgG or IgM below the lower limit of normal) has been observed in RA patients treated with rituximab. There was no increased rate in overall infections or serious infections after the development of low IgG or IgM (see section 4.4).

A small number of spontaneous and literature cases of hypogammaglobulinaemia have been observed in paediatric patients treated with rituximab, in some cases severe and requiring long-term immunoglobulin substitution therapy. The consequences of long-term B cell depletion in paediatric patients are unknown.

Summary of the Safety Profile (granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis)

In the clinical trial in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangitis, 99 patients were treated with rituximab (375 mg/m^2, once weekly for 4 weeks) and glucocorticoids (see section 5.1).

Tabulated list of adverse reactions

The ADRs listed in Table 3 were all adverse events which occurred at an incidence of ≥ 5% in the rituximab group.

Table 3 Adverse drug reactions occurring at 6-months in ≥ 5% of patients receiving rituximab, and at a higher frequency than the comparator group, in the pivotal clinical study.

Body system **Adverse reaction**	**Rituximab (n=99)**
Infections and infestations	
Urinary tract infection	7%
Bronchitis	5%
Herpes zoster	5%
Nasopharyngitis	5%
Blood and lymphatic system disorders	
Thrombocytopenia	7%
Immune system disorders	
Cytokine release syndrome	5%
Metabolism and nutrition disorders	
Hyperkalaemia	5%
Psychiatric disorders	
Insomnia	14%
Nervous system disorders	
Dizziness	10%
Tremor	10%
Vascular disorders	
Hypertension	12%
Flushing	5%

Body system Adverse reaction	Rituximab (n=99)
Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders	
Cough	12%
Dyspnoea	11%
Epistaxis	11%
Nasal congestion	6%
Gastrointestinal disorders	
Diarrhoea	18%
Dyspepsia	6%
Constipation	5%
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	
Acne	7%
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders	
Muscle spasms	18%
Arthralgia	15%
Back pain	10%
Muscle weakness	5%
Musculoskeletal pain	5%
Pain in extremities	5%
General disorders and administration site conditions	
Peripheral oedema	16%
Investigations	
Decreased haemoglobin	6%

Description of selected adverse drug reactions

Infusion related reactions
IRRs in the GPA and MPA clinical trial were defined as any adverse event occurring within 24 hours of an infusion and considered to be infusion-related by investigators in the safety population. Ninety nine patients were treated with rituximab and 12% experienced at least one IRR. All IRRs were CTC Grade 1 or 2. The most common IRRs included cytokine release syndrome, flushing, throat irritation, and tremor. Rituximab was given in combination with intravenous glucocorticoids which may reduce the incidence and severity of these events.

Infections
In the 99 rituximab patients, the overall rate of infection was approximately 237 per 100 patient years (95% CI 197-285) at the 6-month primary endpoint. Infections were predominately mild to moderate and consisted mostly of upper respiratory tract infections, herpes zoster and urinary tract infections.

The rate of serious infections was approximately 25 per 100 patient years. The most frequently reported serious infection in the rituximab group was pneumonia at a frequency of 4%.

Malignancies
The incidence of malignancy in rituximab treated patients in the granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis clinical study was 2.00 per 100 patient years at the study common closing date (when the final patient had completed the follow-up period). On the basis of standardised incidence ratios, the incidence of malignancies appears to be similar to that previously reported in patients with ANCA-associated vasculitis.

Cardiovascular adverse reactions
Cardiac events occurred at a rate of approximately 273 per 100 patient years (95% CI 149-470) at the 6-month primary endpoint. The rate of serious cardiac events was 2.1 per 100 patient years (95% CI 3-15). The most frequently reported events were tachycardia (4%) and atrial fibrillation (3%) (see section 4.4).

Neurologic events
Cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS) have been reported in autoimmune conditions. Signs and symptoms included visual disturbance, headache, seizures and altered mental status, with or without associated hypertension. A diagnosis of PRES/RPLS requires confirmation by brain imaging. The reported cases had recognised risk factors for PRES/RPLS, including the patients' underlying disease, hypertension, immunosuppressive therapy and/or chemotherapy.

Hepatitis B reactivation
A small number of cases of hepatitis B reactivation, some with fatal outcome, have been reported in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients receiving rituximab in the post-marketing setting.

Hypogammaglobulinaemia
Hypogammaglobulinaemia (IgA, IgG or IgM below the lower limit of normal) has been observed in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients treated with rituximab. At 6 months, in the active-controlled, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, non-inferiority trial, in the rituximab group, 27%, 58% and 51% of patients with normal immunoglobulin levels at baseline, had low IgA, IgG and IgM levels, respectively compared to 25%, 50% and 46% in the cyclophosphamide group. There was no increased rate in overall infections or serious infections in patients with low IgA, IgG or IgM.

Neutropenia
In the active-controlled, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, non-inferiority trial of rituximab in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis, 24% of patients in the rituximab group (single course) and 23% of patients in the cyclophosphamide group developed CTC grade 3 or greater neutropenia. Neutropenia was not associated with an observed increase in serious infection in rituximab-treated patients. The effect of multiple rituximab courses on the development of neutropenia in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients has not been studied in clinical trials.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders
Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported very rarely.

Reporting of suspected adverse reactions

Reporting suspected adverse reactions after authorisation of the medicinal product is important. It allows continued monitoring of the benefit/risk balance of the medicinal product. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions via the national reporting system listed in Appendix V.

4.9 Overdose

Limited experience with doses higher than the approved dose of intravenous rituximab formulation is available from clinical trials in humans. The highest intravenous dose of rituximab tested in humans to date is 5000 mg (2250 mg/m^2), tested in a dose escalation study in patients with CLL. No additional safety signals were identified.

Patients who experience overdose should have immediate interruption of their infusion and be closely

monitored.

In the post-marketing setting five cases of rituximab overdose have been reported. Three cases had no reported adverse event. The two adverse events that were reported were flu-like symptoms, with a dose of 1.8 g of rituximab and fatal respiratory failure, with a dose of 2 g of rituximab.

5. PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

5.1 Pharmacodynamic properties

Pharmacotherapeutic group: antineoplastic agents, monoclonal antibodies, ATC code: L01XC02

Rituzena is a biosimilar medicinal product. Detailed information is available on the website of the European Medicines Agency http://www.ema.europa.eu.

Rituximab binds specifically to the transmembrane antigen, CD20, a non-glycosylated phosphoprotein, located on pre-B and mature B lymphocytes. The antigen is expressed on >95 % of all B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphomas.

CD20 is found on both normal and malignant B cells, but not on haematopoietic stem cells, pro-B cells, normal plasma cells or other normal tissue. This antigen does not internalize upon antibody binding and is not shed from the cell surface. CD20 does not circulate in the plasma as a free antigen and, thus, does not compete for antibody binding.

The Fab domain of rituximab binds to the CD20 antigen on B lymphocytes and the Fc domain can recruit immune effector functions to mediate B cell lysis. Possible mechanisms of effector-mediated cell lysis include complement-dependent cytotoxicity (CDC) resulting from C1q binding, and antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity (ADCC) mediated by one or more of the Fcγ receptors on the surface of granulocytes, macrophages and NK cells. Rituximab binding to CD20 antigen on B lymphocytes has also been demonstrated to induce cell death via apoptosis.

Peripheral B cell counts declined below normal following completion of the first dose of rituximab. In patients treated for haematological malignancies, B cell recovery began within 6 months of treatment and generally returned to normal levels within 12 months after completion of therapy, although in some patients this may take longer (up to a median recovery time of 23 months post-induction therapy). In patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis, the number of peripheral blood B cells decreased to <10 cells/µL after two weekly infusions of rituximab 375 mg/m^2, and remained at that level in most patients up to the 6 month time point. The majority of patients (81%) showed signs of B cell return, with counts >10 cells/µL by month 12, increasing to 87% of patients by month 18.

Clinical experience in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and in chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Follicular lymphoma

Monotherapy

Initial treatment, weekly for 4 doses
In the pivotal trial, 166 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant low-grade or follicular B cell NHL received 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as an intravenous infusion once weekly for four weeks. The overall response rate (ORR) in the intent-to-treat (ITT) population was 48 % (CI_{95}% 41% - 56%) with a 6% complete response (CR) and a 42% partial response (PR) rate. The projected median time to progression (TTP) for responding patients was 13.0 months. In a subgroup analysis, the ORR was higher in patients with IWF B, C, and D histological subtypes as compared to IWF A subtype (58% vs. 12%), higher in patients whose largest lesion was < 5 cm vs. > 7 cm in greatest diameter (53% vs. 38%), and higher in patients with chemosensitive relapse as compared to chemoresistant (defined as

duration of response < 3 months) relapse (50% vs. 22%). ORR in patients previously treated with autologous bone marrow transplant (ABMT) was 78% versus 43% in patients with no ABMT. Neither age, sex, lymphoma grade, initial diagnosis, presence or absence of bulky disease, normal or high LDH nor presence of extranodal disease had a statistically significant effect (Fisher's exact test) on response to rituximab. A statistically significant correlation was noted between response rates and bone marrow involvement. 40% of patients with bone marrow involvement responded compared to 59% of patients with no bone marrow involvement (p=0.0186). This finding was not supported by a stepwise logistic regression analysis in which the following factors were identified as prognostic factors: histological type, bcl-2 positivity at baseline, resistance to last chemotherapy and bulky disease.

Initial treatment, weekly for 8 doses
In a multicentre, single-arm trial, 37 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant, low grade or follicular B cell NHL received 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as intravenous infusion weekly for eight doses. The ORR was 57% (95% Confidence interval (CI); 41% – 73%; CR 14%, PR 43%) with a projected median TTP for responding patients of 19.4 months (range 5.3 to 38.9 months).

Initial treatment, bulky disease, weekly for 4 doses
In pooled data from three trials, 39 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant, bulky disease (single lesion ≥ 10 cm in diameter), low grade or follicular B cell NHL received 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as intravenous infusion weekly for four doses. The ORR was 36 % (CI_{95}% 21% – 51%; CR 3%, PR 33%) with a median TTP for responding patients of 9.6 months (range 1.5 to 26.8 months).

Re-treatment, weekly for 4 doses
In a multicentre, single-arm trial, 58 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant low grade or follicular B cell NHL, who had achieved an objective clinical response to a prior course of rituximab, were re-treated with 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as intravenous infusion weekly for four doses. Three of the patients had received two courses of rituximab before enrolment and thus were given a third course in the study. Two patients were re-treated twice in the study. For the 60 re-treatments on study, the ORR was 38% (CI_{95} % 26% – 51%; 10% CR, 28% PR) with a projected median TTP for responding patients of 17.8 months (range 5.4 – 26.6). This compares favourably with the TTP achieved after the prior course of rituximab (12.4 months).

Initial treatment, in combination with chemotherapy

In an open-label randomised trial, a total of 322 previously untreated patients with follicular lymphoma were randomised to receive either CVP chemotherapy (cyclophosphamide 750 mg/m^2, vincristine 1.4 mg/m^2 up to a maximum of 2 mg on day 1, and prednisolone 40 mg/m^2/day on days 1 -5) every 3 weeks for 8 cycles or rituximab 375 mg/m^2 in combination with CVP (R-CVP). Rituximab was administered on the first day of each treatment cycle. A total of 321 patients (162 R-CVP, 159 CVP) received therapy and were analysed for efficacy. The median follow up of patients was 53 months. R-CVP led to a significant benefit over CVP for the primary endpoint, time to treatment failure (27 months vs. 6.6 months, p < 0.0001, log-rank test). The proportion of patients with a tumour response (CR, CRu, PR) was significantly higher (p< 0.0001 Chi-Square test) in the R-CVP group (80.9%) than the CVP group (57.2%). Treatment with R-CVP significantly prolonged the time to disease progression or death compared to CVP, 28.6 months and 14.7 months, respectively (p < 0.0001, log-rank test). The median duration of response was 37.7 months in the R-CVP group and was 13.5 months in the CVP group (p < 0.0001, log-rank test).

The difference between the treatment groups with respect to overall survival showed a significant clinical difference (p=0.029, log-rank test stratified by centre): survival rates at 53 months were 80.9% for patients in the R-CVP group compared to 71.1 % for patients in the CVP group.

Results from three other randomised trials using rituximab in combination with chemotherapy regimen other than CVP (CHOP, MCP, CHVP/Interferon-α) have also demonstrated significant improvements in response rates, time-dependent parameters as well as in overall survival. Key

results from all four studies are summarised in table 4.

Table 4 Summary of key results from four phase III randomised studies evaluating the benefit of rituximab with different chemotherapy regimens in follicular lymphoma

Study	Treatment, N	Median FU, months	ORR, %	CR,%	Median TTF/PFS/ EFS mo	OS rates, %
M39021	CVP, 159 R-CVP, 162	53	57 81	10 41	Median TTP: 14.7 33.6 P<0.0001	53-months 71.1 80.9 p=0.029
GLSG'00	CHOP, 205 R-CHOP, 223	18	90 96	17 20	Median TTF: 2.6 years Not reached p < 0.001	18-months 90 95 p = 0.016
OSHO-39	MCP, 96 R-MCP, 105	47	75 92	25 50	Median PFS: 28.8 Not reached p < 0.0001	48-months 74 87 p = 0.0096
FL2000	CHVP-IFN, 183 R-CHVP-IFN, 175	42	85 94	49 76	Median EFS: 36 Not reached p < 0.0001	42-months 84 91 p = 0.029

EFS – Event Free Survival
TTP – Time to progression or death
PFS – Progression-Free Survival
TTF – Time to Treatment Failure
OS rates – survival rates at the time of the analyses

Diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

In a randomised, open-label trial a total of 399 previously untreated elderly patients (age 60 to 80 years) with diffuse large B cell lymphoma received standard CHOP chemotherapy (cyclophosphamide 750 mg/m^2, doxorubicin 50 mg/m^2, vincristine 1.4 mg/m^2 up to a maximum of 2 mg on day 1, and prednisolone 40 mg/m^2/day on days 1-5) every 3 weeks for eight cycles, or rituximab 375 mg/m^2 plus CHOP (R-CHOP). Rituzena was administered on the first day of the treatment cycle.

The final efficacy analysis included all randomised patients (197 CHOP, 202 R-CHOP), and had a median follow-up duration of approximately 31 months. The two treatment groups were well balanced in baseline disease characteristics and disease status. The final analysis confirmed that R-CHOP treatment was associated with a clinically relevant and statistically significant improvement in the duration of event-free survival (the primary efficacy parameter; where events were death, relapse or progression of lymphoma, or institution of a new anti-lymphoma treatment) (p = 0.0001). Kaplan Meier estimates of the median duration of event-free survival were 35 months in the R-CHOP arm compared to 13 months in the CHOP arm, representing a risk reduction of 41 %. At 24 months, estimates for overall survival were 68.2 % in the R-CHOP arm compared to 57.4 % in the CHOP arm. A subsequent analysis of the duration of overall survival, carried out with a median follow-up duration of 60 months, confirmed the benefit of R-CHOP over CHOP treatment (p=0.0071), representing a risk reduction of 32 %.

The analysis of all secondary parameters (response rates, progression-free survival, disease-free survival, duration of response) verified the treatment effect of R-CHOP compared to CHOP. The complete response rate after cycle 8 was 76.2 % in the R-CHOP group and 62.4 % in the CHOP

group (p=0.0028). The risk of disease progression was reduced by 46 % and the risk of relapse by 51 %. In all patients subgroups (gender, age, age adjusted IPI, Ann Arbor stage, ECOG, β2 microglobulin, LDH, albumin, B symptoms, bulky disease, extranodal sites, bone marrow involvement), the risk ratios for event-free survival and overall survival (R-CHOP compared with CHOP) were less than 0.83 and 0.95 respectively. R-CHOP was associated with improvements in outcome for both high- and low-risk patients according to age adjusted IPI.

Clinical laboratory findings

Of 67 patients evaluated for human anti-mouse antibody (HAMA), no responses were noted. Of 356 patients evaluated for HACA, 1.1 % (4 patients) were positive.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

In two open-label randomised trials, a total of 817 previously untreated patients and 552 patients with relapsed/refractory CLL were randomised to receive either FC chemotherapy (fludarabine 25 mg/m^2, cyclophosphamide 250 mg/m^2, days 1-3) every 4 weeks for 6 cycles or rituximab in combination with FC (R-FC). Rituximab was administered at a dosage of 375 mg/m^2 during the first cycle one day prior to chemotherapy and at a dosage of 500 mg/m^2 on day 1 of each subsequent treatment cycle. Patients were excluded from the study in relapsed/refractory CLL if they had previously been treated with monoclonal antibodies or if they were refractory (defined as failure to achieve a partial remission for at least 6 months) to fludarabine or any nucleoside analogue. A total of 810 patients (403 R-FC, 407 FC) for the first-line study (Table 5a and Table 5b) and 552 patients (276 R-FC, 276 FC) for the relapsed/refractory study (Table 6) were analysed for efficacy.

In the first-line study, after a median observation time of 48.1 months, the median PFS was 55 months in the R-FC group and 33 months in the FC group ($p < 0.0001$, log-rank test). The analysis of overall survival showed a significant benefit of R-FC treatment over FC chemotherapy alone ($p = 0.0319$, log-rank test) (Table 5a). The benefit in terms of PFS was consistently observed in most patient subgroups analysed according to disease risk at baseline (i.e. Binet stages A-C) (Table 5b).

Table 5a First-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia Overview of efficacy results for rituximab plus FC vs. FC alone - 48.1 months median observation time

Efficacy parameter	Kaplan-Meier estimate of median time to event (months)			Risk reduction
	FC (N = 409)	R-FC (N=408)	Log-rank p value	
Progression-free survival (PFS)	32.8	55.3	<0.0001	45%
Overall survival	NR	NR	0.0319	27%
Event free survival	31.3	51.8	<0.0001	44%
Response rate (CR, nPR, or PR) CR rates	72.6% 16.9%	85.8% 36.0%	<0.0001 <0.0001	n.a. n.a.
Duration of response*	36.2	57.3	<0.0001	44%
Disease free survival (DFS)**	48.9	60.3	0.0520	31%
Time to new treatment	47.2	69.7	<0.0001	42%

Response rate and CR rates analysed using Chi-squared Test. NR: not reached; n.a.: not applicable
*: only applicable to patients achieving a CR, nPR, PR
**: only applicable to patients achieving a CR

Table 5b First-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia Hazard ratios of progression-free survival according to Binet stage (ITT) - 48.1 months median observation time

	Number of patients	Hazard ratio (95% CI)	p-value (Wald test, not

Progression-free survival (PFS)	FC	R-FC		adjusted)
Binet stage A	22	18	0.39 (0.15; 0.98)	0.0442
Binet stage B	259	263	0.52 (0.41; 0.66)	<0.0001
Binet stage C	126	126	0.68 (0.49; 0.95)	0.0224

CI: Confidence Interval

In the relapsed/refractory study, the median progression-free survival (primary endpoint) was 30.6 months in the R-FC group and 20.6 months in the FC group (p=0.0002, log-rank test). The benefit in terms of PFS was observed in almost all patient subgroups analysed according to disease risk at baseline. A slight but not significant improvement in overall survival was reported in the R-FC compared to the FC arm.

Table 6 Treatment of relapsed/refractory chronic lymphocytic leukaemia - overview of efficacy results for rituximab plus FC vs. FC alone (25.3 months median observation time)

Efficacy parameter	Kaplan-Meier estimate of median time to event (months)			Risk reduction
	FC (N = 276)	R-FC (N=276	Log-Rank p	
Progression-free survival (PFS)	20.6	30.6	0.0002	35%
Overall survival	51.9	NR	0.2874	17%
Event free survival	19.3	28.7	0.0002	36%
Response rate (CR, nPR, or PR)	58.0%	69.9%	0.0034	n.a.
CR rates	13.0%	24.3%	0.0007	n.a.
Duration of response *	27.6	39.6	0.0252	31%
Disease free survival (DFS)**	42.2	39.6	0.8842	-6%
Time to new CLL treatment	34.2	NR	0.0024	35%

Response rate and CR rates analysed using Chi-squared Test. NR: not reached n.a. not applicable
*: only applicable to patients achieving a CR, nPR, PR;
**: only applicable to patients achieving a CR;

Results from other supportive studies using rituximab in combination with other chemotherapy regimens (including CHOP, FCM, PC, PCM, bendamustine and cladribine) for the treatment of previously untreated and/or relapsed/refractory CLL patients have also demonstrated high overall response rates with benefit in terms of PFS rates, albeit with modestly higher toxicity (especially myelotoxicity). These studies support the use of rituximab with any chemotherapy.

Data in approximately 180 patients pre-treated with rituximab have demonstrated clinical benefit (including CR) and are supportive for rituximab re-treatment.

Paediatric population

The European Medicines Agency has waived the obligation to submit the results of studies with rituximab in all subsets of the paediatric population with follicular lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. See section 4.2 for information on paediatric use.

Clinical experience in granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) and microscopic polyangiitis

A total of 197 patients aged 15 years or older with severely, active granulomatosis with polyangiitis

(75%) and microscopic polyangiitis (24%) were enrolled and treated in an active-comparator, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, non-inferiority trial.

Patients were randomised in a 1:1 ratio to receive either oral cyclophosphamide daily (2mg/kg/day) for 3-6 months or rituximab (375 mg/m^2) once weekly for 4 weeks. All patients in the cyclophosphamide arm received azathioprine maintenance therapy during follow-up. Patients in both arms received 1000mg of pulse intravenous (IV) methylprednisolone (or another equivalent-dose glucocorticoid) per day for 1 to 3 days, followed by oral prednisone (1 mg/kg/day, not exceeding 80 mg/day). Prednisone tapering was to be completed by 6 months from the start of study treatment.

The primary outcome measure was achievement of complete remission at 6 months defined as a Birmingham Vasculitis Activity Score for Wegener's granulomatosis (BVAS/WG) of 0, and off glucocorticoid therapy. The prespecified non-inferiority margin for the treatment difference was 20%. The trial demonstrated non-inferiority of rituximab to cyclophosphamide for complete remission (CR) at 6 months (Table 7).

Efficacy was observed both for patients with newly diagnosed disease and for patients with relapsing disease (Table 8).

Table 7 Percentage of patients who achieved complete remission at 6 months (Intent-to-treat population*)

	Rituximab (n = 99)	**Cyclophosphamide (n = 98)**	**Treatment difference (Rituximab --cyclophosphamide)**
Rate	63.6%	53.1%	10.6% 95.1%[b] CI (−3.2%, 24.3%) [a]

– CI = confidence interval.
– * Worst case imputation
[a] Non-inferiority was demonstrated since the lower bound (−3.2%) was higher than the pre-determined non-inferiority margin (− 20%).
[b] The 95.1% confidence level reflects an additional 0.001 alpha to account for an interim efficacy analysis.

Table 8 Complete remission at 6-months by disease status

	Rituximab	**Cyclophosphamide**	**Difference (CI 95%)**
All patients **Newly diagnosed**	n=99 n=48 n=51	n=98 n=48 n=50	
Complete remission			
All Patients	63.6%	53.1%	10.6% (-3.2, 24.3)
Newly diagnosed	60.4%	64.6%	− 4.2% (− 23.6, 15.3)
Relapsing	66.7%	42.0%	24.7% (5.8, 43.6)

Worst case imputation is applied for patients with missing data

Complete remission at 12 and 18 months
In the rituximab group, 48% of patients achieved CR at 12 months, and 39% of patients achieved CR at 18 months. In patients treated with cyclophosphamide (followed by azathioprine for maintenance of complete remission), 39% of patients achieved CR at 12 months, and 33% of patients achieved CR at 18 months. From month 12 to month 18, 8 relapses were observed in the rituximab group compared with four in the cyclophosphamide group.

Retreatment with rituximab
Based upon investigator judgment, 15 patients received a second course of rituximab therapy for treatment of relapse of disease activity which occurred between 6 and 18 months after the first course of rituximab. The limited data from the present trial preclude any conclusions regarding the

efficacy of subsequent courses of rituximab in patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis.

Continued immunosuppressive therapy may be especially appropriate in patients at risk for relapses (i.e. with history of earlier relapses and granulomatosis with polyangiitis, or patients with reconstitution of B-lymphocytes in addition to PR3-ANCA at monitoring). When remission with rituximab has been achieved, continued immunosuppressive therapy may be considered to prevent relapse. The efficacy and safety of rituximab in maintenance therapy has not been established.

Laboratory evaluations

A total of 23/99 (23%) rituximab-treated patients in the trial tested positive for HACA by 18 months. None of the 99 rituximab-treated patients were HACA positive at screening. The clinical relevance of HACA formation in rituximab-treated patients is unclear.

5.2 Pharmacokinetic properties

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Based on a population pharmacokinetic analysis in 298 NHL patients who received single or multiple infusions of rituximab as a single agent or in combination with CHOP therapy (applied rituximab doses ranged from 100 to 500 mg/m^2), the typical population estimates of nonspecific clearance (CL_1), specific clearance (CL_2) likely contributed by B cells or tumour burden, and central compartment volume of distribution (V_1) were 0.14 L/day, 0.59 L/day, and 2.7 L, respectively. The estimated median terminal elimination half-life of rituximab was 22 days (range, 6.1 to 52 days). Baseline CD19-positive cell counts and size of measurable tumour lesions contributed to some of the variability in CL_2 of rituximab in data from 161 patients given 375 mg/m^2 as an intravenous infusion for 4 weekly doses. Patients with higher CD19-positive cell counts or tumour lesions had a higher CL_2. However, a large component of inter-individual variability remained for CL_2 after correction for CD19-positive cell counts and tumour lesion size. V_1 varied by body surface area (BSA) and CHOP therapy. This variability in V_1 (27.1% and 19.0%) contributed by the range in BSA (1.53 to 2.32 m^2) and concurrent CHOP therapy, respectively, were relatively small. Age, gender and WHO performance status had no effect on the pharmacokinetics of rituximab. This analysis suggests that dose adjustment of rituximab with any of the tested covariates is not expected to result in a meaningful reduction in its pharmacokinetic variability.

Rituximab, administered as an intravenous infusion at a dose of 375 mg/m^2 at weekly intervals for 4 doses to 203 patients with NHL naive to rituximab, yielded a mean C_{max} following the fourth infusion of 486 µg/mL (range, 77.5 to 996.6 µg/mL). Rituximab was detectable in the serum of patients 3 – 6 months after completion of last treatment.

Upon administration of rituximab at a dose of 375 mg/m^2 as an intravenous infusion at weekly intervals for 8 doses to 37 patients with NHL, the mean C_{max} increased with each successive infusion, spanning from a mean of 243 µg/mL (range, 16 – 582 µg/mL) after the first infusion to 550 µg/mL (range, 171 – 1177 µg/mL) after the eighth infusion.

The pharmacokinetic profile of rituximab when administered as 6 infusions of 375 mg/m^2 in combination with 6 cycles of CHOP chemotherapy was similar to that seen with rituximab alone.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Rituximab was administered as an intravenous infusion at a first-cycle dose of 375 mg/m^2 increased to 500 mg/m^2 each cycle for 5 doses in combination with fludarabine and cyclophosphamide in CLL patients. The mean C_{max} (N=15) was 408 µg/mL (range, 97 – 764 µg/mL) after the fifth 500 mg/m^2 infusion and the mean terminal half-life was 32 days (range, 14 – 62 days).

Rheumatoid arthritis

Following two intravenous infusions of rituximab at a dose of 1000 mg, two weeks apart, the mean terminal half-life was 20.8 days (range, 8.58 to 35.9 days), mean systemic clearance was 0.23 L/day (range, 0.091 to 0.67 L/day), and mean steady-state distribution volume was 4.6 L (range, 1.7 to 7.51 L). Population pharmacokinetic analysis of the same data gave similar mean values for systemic clearance and half-life, 0.26 L/day and 20.4 days, respectively. Population pharmacokinetic analysis revealed that BSA and gender were the most significant covariates to explain inter-individual variability in pharmacokinetic parameters. After adjusting for BSA, male subjects had a larger volume of distribution and a faster clearance than female subjects. The gender- related pharmacokinetic differences are not considered to be clinically relevant and dose adjustment is not required. No pharmacokinetic data are available in patients with hepatic or renal impairment.

The pharmacokinetics of rituximab were assessed following two intravenous (IV) doses of 500 mg and 1000 mg on Days 1 and 15 in four studies. In all these studies, rituximab pharmacokinetics were dose proportional over the limited dose range studied. Mean Cmax for serum rituximab following first infusion ranged from 157 to 171 µg/mL for 2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 298 to 341 µg/mL for 2 x 1000 mg dose. Following second infusion, mean Cmax ranged from 183 to 198 µg/mL for the2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 355 to 404 µg/mL for the 2 x 1000 mg dose. Mean terminal elimination half-life ranged from 15 to 16 days for the 2 x 500 mg dose group and 17 to 21 days for the 2 x 1000 mg dose group. Mean Cmax was 16 to 19% higher following second infusion compared to the first infusion for both doses.

The pharmacokinetics of rituximab were assessed following two IV doses of 500 mg and 1000 mg upon re-treatment in the second course. Mean Cmax for serum rituximab following first infusion was 170 to 175 µg/mL for 2 x 500 mg dose and 317 to 370 µg/mL for 2 x 1000 mg dose. Cmax following second infusion, was 207 µg/mL for the 2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 377 to 386 µg/mL for the 2 x 1000 mg dose. Mean terminal elimination half-life after the second infusion, following the second course, was 19 days for 2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 21 to 22 days for the 2 x 1000 mg dose. PK parameters for rituximab were comparable over the two treatment courses.

The pharmacokinetic (PK) parameters in the anti-TNF inadequate responder population, following the same dosage regimen (2 x 1000 mg, IV, 2 weeks apart), were similar with a mean maximum serum concentration of 369 µg/mL and a mean terminal half-life of 19.2 days.

Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Based on the population pharmacokinetic analysis of data in 97 patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis who received 375 mg/m^2 rituximab once weekly for four doses, the estimated median terminal elimination half-life was 23 days (range, 9 to 49 days). Rituximab mean clearance and volume of distribution were 0.313 L/day (range, 0.116 to 0.726 L/day) and 4.50 L (range 2.25 to 7.39 L) respectively. The PK parameters of rituximab in these patients appear similar to what has been observed in rheumatoid arthritis patients.

5.3 Preclinical safety data

Rituximab has shown to be highly specific to the CD20 antigen on B cells. Toxicity studies in cynomolgus monkeys have shown no other effect than the expected pharmacological depletion of B cells in peripheral blood and in lymphoid tissue.

Developmental toxicity studies have been performed in cynomolgus monkeys at doses up to 100 mg/kg (treatment on gestation days 20-50) and have revealed no evidence of toxicity to the foetus due to rituximab. However, dose-dependent pharmacologic depletion of B cells in the lymphoid organs of the foetuses was observed, which persisted post natally and was accompanied by a decrease in IgG level in the newborn animals affected. B cell counts returned to normal in these animals within 6 months of birth and did not compromise the reaction to immunisation.

Standard tests to investigate mutagenicity have not been carried out, since such tests are not relevant for this molecule. No long-term animal studies have been performed to establish the carcinogenic potential of rituximab.

Specific studies to determine the effects of rituximab on fertility have not been performed. In general toxicity studies in cynomolgus monkeys no deleterious effects on reproductive organs in males or females were observed.

6. PHARMACEUTICAL PARTICULARS

6.1 List of excipients

Sodium chloride
Tri-sodium citrate dihydrate
Polysorbate 80
Water for injections

6.2 Incompatibilities

No incompatibilities between rituximab and polyvinyl chloride or polyethylene bags or infusion sets have been observed.

6.3 Shelf life

Unopened vial
3 years

Diluted product
The prepared infusion solution of rituximab is physically and chemically stable for 24 hours at 2 °C - 8 °C and subsequently 12 hours at room temperature (not more than 30 °C).

From a microbiological point of view, the prepared infusion solution should be used immediately. If not used immediately, in-use storage times and conditions prior to use are the responsibility of the user and would normally not be longer than 24 hours at 2 °C – 8 °C, unless dilution has taken place in controlled and validated aseptic conditions.

6.4 Special precautions for storage

Store in a refrigerator (2 °C – 8 °C). Keep the container in the outer carton in order to protect from light.

For storage conditions after dilution of the medicinal product, see section 6.3.

6.5 Nature and contents of container

Clear Type I glass vials with butyl rubber stopper containing 100 mg of rituximab in 10 mL. Pack of 2 vials.

6.6 Special precautions for disposal and other handling

Rituzena is provided in sterile, preservative-free, non-pyrogenic, single use vials.

Aseptically withdraw the necessary amount of Rituzena, and dilute to a calculated concentration of 1 to 4 mg/mL rituximab into an infusion bag containing sterile, pyrogen-free sodium chloride9 mg/mL (0.9%) solution for injection or 5 % D-Glucose in water. For mixing the solution, gently invert the bag in order to avoid foaming. Care must be taken to ensure the sterility of prepared

solutions. Since the medicinal product does not contain any anti-microbial preservative or bacteriostatic agents, aseptic technique must be observed. Parenteral medicinal products should be inspected visually for particulate matter and discolouration prior to administration.

Any unused medicinal product or waste material should be disposed of in accordance with local requirements.

7. MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER

Celltrion Healthcare Hungary Kft.
1062 Budapest
Váci út 1-3. WestEnd Office Building B torony
Hungary

8. MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER(S)

EU/1/17/1206/002

9. DATE OF FIRST AUTHORISATION/RENEWAL OF THE AUTHORISATION

Date of first authorisation: 13 July 2017
Date of latest renewal:

10. DATE OF REVISION OF THE TEXT

Detailed information on this medicinal product is available on the website of the European Medicines Agency http://www.ema.europa.eu/

▼This medicinal product is subject to additional monitoring. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions. See section 4.8 for how to report adverse reactions.

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

Rituzena 500 mg concentrate for solution for infusion

2. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE COMPOSITION

Each vial contains 500 mg of rituximab.

Each mL of concentrate contains 10mg of rituximab.

Rituximab is a genetically engineered chimeric mouse/human monoclonal antibody representing a glycosylated immunoglobulin with human IgG1 constant regions and murine light-chain and heavy-chain variable region sequences. The antibody is produced by mammalian (Chinese hamster ovary) cell suspension culture and purified by affinity chromatography and ion exchange, including specific viral inactivation and removal procedures.

For the full list of excipients, see section 6.1.

3. PHARMACEUTICAL FORM

Concentrate for solution for infusion.
Clear, colourless liquid.

4. CLINICAL PARTICULARS

4.1 Therapeutic indications

Rituzena is indicated in adults for the following indications:

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL)

Rituzena is indicated for the treatment of previously untreated patients with stage III-IV follicular lymphoma in combination with chemotherapy.

Rituzena monotherapy is indicated for treatment of patients with stage III-IV follicular lymphoma who are chemo-resistant or are in their second or subsequent relapse after chemotherapy.

Rituzena is indicated for the treatment of patients with CD20 positive diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in combination with CHOP (cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine, prednisolone) chemotherapy.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL)

Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy is indicated for the treatment of patients with previously untreated and relapsed/refractory CLL. Only limited data are available on efficacy and safety for patients previously treated with monoclonal antibodies including Rituzena or patients refractory to previous Rituzena plus chemotherapy.

See section 5.1 for further information.

Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Rituzena, in combination with glucocorticoids, is indicated for the induction of remission in adult patients with severe, active granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) (GPA) and microscopic polyangiitis (MPA).

4.2 Posology and method of administration

Rituzena should be administered under the close supervision of an experienced healthcare professional, and in an environment where full resuscitation facilities are immediately available (see section 4.4).

Premedication consisting of an anti-pyretic and an antihistaminic, e.g. paracetamol and diphenhydramine, should always be given before each administration of Rituzena.

In patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and CLL, premedication with glucocorticoids should be considered if Rituzena is not given in combination with glucocorticoid-containing chemotherapy.

In patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) or microscopic polyangiitis, methylprednisolone given intravenously for 1 to 3 days at a dose of 1000 mg per day is recommended prior to the first infusion of Rituzena (the last dose of methylprednisolone may be given on the same day as the first infusion of Rituzena). This should be followed by oral prednisone 1 mg/kg/day (not to exceed 80 mg/day, and tapered as rapidly as possible based on clinical need) during and after Rituzena treatment.

Posology

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Follicular non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Combination therapy
The recommended dose of Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy for induction treatment of previously untreated or relapsed/refractory patients with follicular lymphoma is: 375 mg/m^2 body surface area per cycle, for up to 8 cycles.
Rituzena should be administered on day 1 of each chemotherapy cycle, after intravenous administration of the glucocorticoid component of the chemotherapy if applicable.

Monotherapy

- Relapsed/refractory follicular lymphoma

The recommended dose of Rituzena monotherapy used as induction treatment for adult patients with stage III-IV follicular lymphoma who are chemoresistant or are in their second or subsequent relapse after chemotherapy is: 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered as an intravenous infusion once weekly for four weeks.

For retreatment with Rituzena monotherapy for patients who have responded to previous treatment with Rituzena monotherapy for relapsed/refractory follicular lymphoma, the recommended dose is: 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered as an intravenous infusion once weekly for four weeks (see section 5.1).

Diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Rituzena should be used in combination with CHOP chemotherapy. The recommended dosage is 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered on day 1 of each chemotherapy cycle for 8 cycles after intravenous infusion of the glucocorticoid component of CHOP. Safety and efficacy of Rituzena

have not been established in combination with other chemotherapies in diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Dose adjustments during treatment

No dose reductions of Rituzena are recommended. When Rituzena is given in combination with chemotherapy, standard dose reductions for the chemotherapeutic medicinal products should be applied.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Prophylaxis with adequate hydration and administration of uricostatics starting 48 hours prior to start of therapy is recommended for CLL patients to reduce the risk of tumour lysis syndrome. For CLL patients whose lymphocyte counts are > 25 x 10^9/L it is recommended to administer prednisone/prednisolone 100 mg intravenous shortly before infusion with Rituzena to decrease the rate and severity of acute infusion reactions and/or cytokine release syndrome.

The recommended dosage of Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy for previously untreated and relapsed/refractory patients is 375 mg/m^2 body surface area administered on day 0 of the first treatment cycle followed by 500 mg/m^2 body surface area administered on day 1 of each subsequent cycle for 6 cycles in total. The chemotherapy should be given after Rituzena infusion.

Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Patients treated with Rituzena must be given the patient alert card with each infusion.

The recommended dosage of Rituzena for induction of remission therapy of granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis is 375 mg/m^2 body surface area, administered as an intravenous infusion once weekly for 4 weeks (four infusions in total).

Pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia (PCP) prophylaxis is recommended for patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis during and following Rituzena treatment, as appropriate.

Special populations

Elderly
No dose adjustment is required in elderly patients (aged >65 years).

Paediatric population
The safety and efficacy of Rituzena in children below 18 years has not been established. No data are available.

Method of administration

The prepared Rituzena solution should be administered as an intravenous infusion through a dedicated line. It should not be administered as an intravenous push or bolus.

Patients should be closely monitored for the onset of cytokine release syndrome (see section 4.4). Patients who develop evidence of severe reactions, especially severe dyspnoea, bronchospasm or hypoxia should have the infusion interrupted immediately. Patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma should then be evaluated for evidence of tumour lysis syndrome including appropriate laboratory tests and, for pulmonary infiltration, with a chest X-ray. In all patients, the infusion should not be restarted until complete resolution of all symptoms, and normalisation of laboratory values and chest X-ray findings. At this time, the infusion can be initially resumed at not more than one-half the previous rate. If the same severe adverse reactions occur for a second time, the decision to stop the treatment should be seriously considered on a case by case basis.

Mild or moderate infusion-related reactions (IRRs) (section 4.8) usually respond to a reduction in the rate of infusion. The infusion rate may be increased upon improvement of symptoms.

First infusion

The recommended initial rate for infusion is 50 mg/h; after the first 30 minutes, it can be escalated in 50 mg/h increments every 30 minutes, to a maximum of 400 mg/h.

Subsequent infusions

All indications

Subsequent doses of Rituzena can be infused at an initial rate of 100 mg/h, and increased by 100 mg/h increments at 30 minute intervals, to a maximum of 400 mg/h.

4.3 Contraindications

Contraindications for use in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to murine proteins, or to any of the other excipients listed in section 6.1.

Active, severe infections (see section 4.4).

Patients in a severely immunocompromised state.

Contraindications for use in rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to murine proteins, or to any of the other excipients listed in section 6.1.

Active, severe infections (see section 4.4).

Patients in a severely immunocompromised state.

Severe heart failure (New York Heart Association Class IV) or severe, uncontrolled cardiac disease (see section 4.4 regarding other cardiovascular diseases).

4.4 Special warnings and precautions for use

In order to improve traceability of biological medicinal products, the tradename and batch number of the administered product should be clearly recorded (or stated) in the patient file.

Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)

All patients treated with rituximab for rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis must be given the patient alert card with each infusion. The alert card contains important safety information for patients regarding potential increased risk of infections, including PML.

Very rare cases of fatal PML have been reported following the use of rituximab. Patients must be monitored at regular intervals for any new or worsening neurological symptoms or signs that may be suggestive of PML. If PML is suspected, further dosing must be suspended until PML has been excluded. The clinician should evaluate the patient to determine if the symptoms are indicative of

neurological dysfunction, and if so, whether these symptoms are possibly suggestive of PML. Consultation with a neurologist should be considered as clinically indicated.

If any doubt exists, further evaluation, including MRI scan preferably with contrast, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) testing for JC Viral DNA and repeat neurological assessments, should be considered.

The physician should be particularly alert to symptoms suggestive of PML that the patient may not notice (e.g. cognitive, neurological or psychiatric symptoms). Patients should also be advised to inform their partner or caregivers about their treatment, since they may notice symptoms that the patient is not aware of.

If a patient develops PML the dosing of rituximab must be permanently discontinued.

Following reconstitution of the immune system in immunocompromised patients with PML, stabilisation or improved outcome has been seen. It remains unknown if early detection of PML and suspension of rituximab therapy may lead to similar stabilisation or improved outcome.

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Infusion related reactions
Rituximab is associated with infusion-related reactions, which may be related to release of cytokines and/or other chemical mediators. Cytokine release syndrome may be clinically indistinguishable from acute hypersensitivity reactions.

This set of reactions which includes syndrome of cytokine release, tumour lysis syndrome and anaphylactic and hypersensitivity reactions are described below.

Severe infusion-related reactions with fatal outcome have been reported during post-marketing use of the rituximab intravenous formulation, with an onset ranging within 30 minutes to 2 hours after starting the first rituximab intravenous infusion. They were characterised by pulmonary events and in some cases included rapid tumour lysis and features of tumour lysis syndrome in addition to fever, chills, rigors, hypotension, urticaria, angioedema and other symptoms (see section 4.8).

Severe cytokine release syndrome is characterised by severe dyspnoea, often accompanied by bronchospasm and hypoxia, in addition to fever, chills, rigors, urticaria, and angioedema. This syndrome may be associated with some features of tumour lysis syndrome such as hyperuricaemia, hyperkalaemia, hypocalcaemia, hyperphosphataemia, acute renal failure, elevated lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) and may be associated with acute respiratory failure and death. The acute respiratory failure may be accompanied by events such as pulmonary interstitial infiltration or oedema, visible on a chest X-ray. The syndrome frequently manifests itself within one or two hours of initiating the first infusion. Patients with a history of pulmonary insufficiency or those with pulmonary tumour infiltration may be at greater risk of poor outcome and should be treated with increased caution. Patients who develop severe cytokine release syndrome should have their infusion interrupted immediately (see section 4.2) and should receive aggressive symptomatic treatment. Since initial improvement of clinical symptoms may be followed by deterioration, these patients should be closely monitored until tumour lysis syndrome and pulmonary infiltration have been resolved or ruled out. Further treatment of patients after complete resolution of signs and symptoms has rarely resulted in repeated severe cytokine release syndrome.

Patients with a high tumour burden or with a high number ($\geq 25 \times 10^9$/L) of circulating malignant cells such as patients with CLL, who may be at higher risk of especially severe cytokine release syndrome, should only be treated with extreme caution. These patients should be very closely monitored throughout the first infusion. Consideration should be given to the use of a reduced infusion rate for the first infusion in these patients or a split dosing over two days during the first cycle and any subsequent cycles if the lymphocyte count is still $>25 \times 10^9$/L.

Infusion related adverse reactions of all kinds have been observed in 77% of patients treated with

rituximab (including cytokine release syndrome accompanied by hypotension and bronchospasm in 10 % of patients) see section 4.8. These symptoms are usually reversible with interruption of rituximab infusion and administration of an anti-pyretic, an antihistaminic, and, occasionally, oxygen, intravenous saline or bronchodilators, and glucocorticoids if required. Please see cytokine release syndrome above for severe reactions.

Anaphylactic and other hypersensitivity reactions have been reported following the intravenous administration of proteins to patients. In contrast to cytokine release syndrome, true hypersensitivity reactions typically occur within minutes after starting infusion. Medicinal products for the treatment of hypersensitivity reactions, e.g., epinephrine (adrenaline), antihistamines and glucocorticoids, should be available for immediate use in the event of an allergic reaction during administration of rituximab. Clinical manifestations of anaphylaxis may appear similar to clinical manifestations of the cytokine release syndrome (described above). Reactions attributed to hypersensitivity have been reported less frequently than those attributed to cytokine release.

Additional reactions reported in some cases were myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary oedema and acute reversible thrombocytopenia.

Since hypotension may occur during rituximab administration, consideration should be given to withholding anti-hypertensive medicines 12 hours prior to the rituximab infusion.

Cardiac disorders
Angina pectoris, cardiac arrhythmias such as atrial flutter and fibrillation, heart failure and/or myocardial infarction have occurred in patients treated with rituximab. Therefore, patients with a history of cardiac disease and/or cardiotoxic chemotherapy should be monitored closely.

Haematological toxicities
Although rituximab is not myelosuppressive in monotherapy, caution should be exercised when considering treatment of patients with neutrophils < 1.5 x 10^9/L and/or platelet counts < 75 x 10^9/L as clinical experience in this population is limited. Rituximab has been used in 21 patients who underwent autologous bone marrow transplantation and other risk groups with a presumable reduced bone marrow function without inducing myelotoxicity.

Regular full blood counts, including neutrophil and platelet counts, should be performed during rituximab therapy.

Infections
Serious infections, including fatalities, can occur during therapy with rituximab (see section 4.8). Rituximab should not be administered to patients with an active, severe infection (e.g. tuberculosis, sepsis and opportunistic infections, see section 4.3).
Physicians should exercise caution when considering the use of rituximab in patients with a history of recurring or chronic infections or with underlying conditions which may further predispose patients to serious infection (see section 4.8).

Cases of hepatitis B reactivation have been reported in subjects receiving rituximab including fulminant hepatitis with fatal outcome. The majority of these subjects were also exposed to cytotoxic chemotherapy. Limited information from one study in relapsed/refractory CLL patients suggests that rituximab treatment may also worsen the outcome of primary hepatitis B infections. Hepatitis B virus (HBV) screening should be performed in all patients before initiation of treatment with rituximab. At minimum this should include HBsAg-status and HBcAb-status. These can be complemented with other appropriate markers as per local guidelines. Patients with active hepatitis B disease should not be treated with rituximab. Patients with positive hepatitis B serology (either HBsAg or HBcAb) should consult liver disease experts before start of treatment and should be monitored and managed following local medical standards to prevent hepatitis B reactivation.

Very rare cases of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) have been reported during post-marketing use of rituximab in NHL and CLL (see section 4.8). The majority of patients had

received rituximab in combination with chemotherapy or as part of a haematopoietic stem cell transplant.

Immunisations
The safety of immunisation with live viral vaccines, following rituximab therapy has not been studied for NHL and CLL patients and vaccination with live virus vaccines is not recommended. Patients treated with rituximab may receive non-live vaccinations. However, with non-live vaccines response rates may be reduced. In a non-randomised study, patients with relapsed low-grade NHL who received rituximab monotherapy when compared to healthy untreated controls had a lower rate of response to vaccination with tetanus recall antigen (16% vs. 81%) and Keyhole Limpet Haemocyanin (KLH) neoantigen (4% vs. 76% when assessed for >2-fold increase in antibody titer). For CLL patients similar results are assumable considering similarities between both diseases but that has not been investigated in clinical trials.

Mean pre-therapeutic antibody titres against a panel of antigens (Streptococcus pneumoniae, influenza A, mumps, rubella, varicella) were maintained for at least 6 months after treatment with rituximab.

Skin reactions
Severe skin reactions such as Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported (see section 4.8). In case of such an event, with a suspected relationship to rituximab, treatment should be permanently discontinued.

<u>Rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis</u>

Methotrexate (MTX) naïve populations with rheumatoid arthritis
The use of rituximab is not recommended in MTX-naïve patients since a favourable benefit risk relationship has not been established.

Infusion related reactions
Rituximab is associated with infusion related reactions (IRRs), which may be related to release of cytokines and/or other chemical mediators. Premedication consisting of an analgesic/anti-pyretic medicinal product and an anti-histaminic medicinal product, should always be administered before each infusion of rituximab. In rheumatoid arthritis premedication with glucocorticoids should also be administered before each infusion of rituximab in order to reduce the frequency and severity of IRRs (see sections 4.2 and 4.8).

Severe IRRs with fatal outcome have been reported in rheumatoid arthritis patients in the post-marketing setting. In rheumatoid arthritis most infusion-related events reported in clinical trials were mild to moderate in severity. The most common symptoms were allergic reactions like headache, pruritus, throat irritation, flushing, rash, urticaria, hypertension, and pyrexia. In general, the proportion of patients experiencing any infusion reaction was higher following the first infusion than following the second infusion of any treatment course. The incidence of IRR decreased with subsequent courses (see section 4.8). The reactions reported were usually reversible with a reduction in rate, or interruption of rituximab infusion and administration of an anti-pyretic, an antihistamine, and, occasionally, oxygen, intravenous saline or bronchodilators, and glucocorticoids if required. Closely monitor patients with pre-existing cardiac conditions and those who experienced prior cardiopulmonary adverse reactions. Depending on the severity of the IRR and the required interventions, temporarily or permanently discontinue rituximab. In most cases, the infusion can be resumed at a 50 % reduction in rate (e.g. from 100 mg/h to 50 mg/h) when symptoms have completely resolved.

Medicinal products for the treatment of hypersensitivity reactions, e.g. epinephrine (adrenaline), antihistamines and glucocorticoids, should be available for immediate use in the event of an allergic reaction during administration of rituximab.

There are no data on the safety of rituximab in patients with moderate heart failure (NYHA class III) or severe, uncontrolled cardiovascular disease. In patients treated with rituximab, the occurrence of

pre-existing ischemic cardiac conditions becoming symptomatic, such as angina pectoris, has been observed, as well as atrial fibrillation and flutter. Therefore, in patients with a known cardiac history, and those who experienced prior cardiopulmonary adverse reactions the risk of cardiovascular complications resulting from infusion reactions should be considered before treatment with rituximab and patients closely monitored during administration. Since hypotension may occur during rituximab infusion, consideration should be given to withholding anti-hypertensive medicinal product 12 hours prior to the rituximab infusion.

IRRs for patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis were similar to those seen for rheumatoid arthritis patients in clinical trials (see section 4.8).

Cardiac disorders
Angina pectoris, cardiac arrhythmias such as atrial flutter and fibrillation, heart failure and/or myocardial infarction have occurred in patients treated with rituximab. Therefore patients with a history of cardiac disease should be monitored closely (see Infusion related reactions, above).

Infections
Based on the mechanism of action of rituximab and the knowledge that B cells play an important role in maintaining normal immune response, patients have an increased risk of infection following rituximab therapy (see section 5.1). Serious infections, including fatalities, can occur during therapy with rituximab (see section 4.8).Rituximab should not be administered to patients with an active, severe infection (e.g. tuberculosis, sepsis and opportunistic infections, see section 4.3) or severely immunocompromised patients (e.g. where levels of CD4 or CD8 are very low). Physicians should exercise caution when considering the use of rituximab in patients with a history of recurring or chronic infections or with underlying conditions which may further predispose patients to serious infection, e.g. hypogammaglobulinaemia (see section 4.8). It is recommended that immunoglobulin levels are determined prior to initiating treatment with rituximab.

Patients reporting signs and symptoms of infection following rituximab therapy should be promptly evaluated and treated appropriately. Before giving a subsequent course of rituximab treatment, patients should be re-evaluated for any potential risk for infections.

Very rare cases of fatal progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) have been reported following use of rituximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmune diseases including Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) and vasculitis.

Hepatitis B Infections
Cases of hepatitis B reactivation, including those with a fatal outcome, have been reported in rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients receiving rituximab.

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) screening should be performed in all patients before initiation of treatment with rituximab. At minimum this should include HBsAg-status and HBcAb-status. These can be complemented with other appropriate markers as per local guidelines. Patients with active hepatitis B disease should not be treated with rituximab. Patients with positive hepatitis B serology (either HBsAg or HBcAb) should consult liver disease experts before start of treatment and should be monitored and managed following local medical standards to prevent hepatitis B reactivation.

Late neutropenia
Measure blood neutrophils prior to each course of rituximab, and regularly up to 6-months after cessation of treatment, and upon signs or symptoms of infection (see section 4.8).

Skin reactions
Severe skin reactions such as Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported (see section 4.8). In case of such an event with a suspected relationship to rituximab, treatment should be permanently discontinued.

Immunisation
Physicians should review the patient's vaccination status and follow current immunisation guidelines prior to rituximab therapy. Vaccination should be completed at least 4 weeks prior to first administration of rituximab.

The safety of immunisation with live viral vaccines following rituximab therapy has not been studied. Therefore vaccination with live virus vaccines is not recommended whilst on rituximab or whilst peripherally B cell depleted.

Patients treated with rituximab may receive non-live vaccinations. However, response rates to non-live vaccines may be reduced. In a randomised trial, patients with rheumatoid arthritis treated with rituximab and methotrexate had comparable response rates to tetanus recall antigen (39% vs 42%), reduced rates to pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (43% vs. 82% to at least 2 pneumococcal antibody serotypes), and KLH neoantigen (47% vs. 93%), when given 6 months after rituximab as compared to patients only receiving methotrexate. Should non-live vaccinations be required whilst receiving rituximab therapy, these should be completed at least 4 weeks prior to commencing the next course of rituximab.

In the overall experience of rituximab repeat treatment over one year in rheumatoid arthritis, the proportions of patients with positive antibody titres against S. pneumoniae, influenza, mumps, rubella, varicella and tetanus toxoid were generally similar to the proportions at baseline.

Concomitant/sequential use of other DMARDs in rheumatoid arthritis
The concomitant use of rituximab and anti-rheumatic therapies other than those specified under the rheumatoid arthritis indication and posology is not recommended.

There are limited data from clinical trials to fully assess the safety of the sequential use of other DMARDs (including TNF inhibitors and other biologics) following rituximab (see section 4.5). The available data indicate that the rate of clinically relevant infection is unchanged when such therapies are used in patients previously treated with rituximab, however patients should be closely observed for signs of infection if biologic agents and/or DMARDs are used following rituximab therapy.

Malignancy
Immunomodulatory medicinal products may increase the risk of malignancy. On the basis of limited experience with rituximab in rheumatoid arthritis patients (see section 4.8) the present data do not seem to suggest any increased risk of malignancy. However, the possible risk for the development of solid tumours cannot be excluded at this time.

4.5 Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction

Currently, there are limited data on possible medicinal product interactions with rituximab.

In CLL patients, co-administration with rituximab did not appear to have an effect on the pharmacokinetics of fludarabine or cyclophosphamide. In addition, there was no apparent effect of fludarabine and cyclophosphamide on the pharmacokinetics of rituximab.

Co-administration with methotrexate had no effect on the pharmacokinetics of rituximab in rheumatoid arthritis patients.

Patients with human anti-mouse antibody or human anti-chimeric antibody (HAMA/HACA) titres may have allergic or hypersensitivity reactions when treated with other diagnostic or therapeutic monoclonal antibodies.

In patients with rheumatoid arthritis, 283 patients received subsequent therapy with a biologic DMARD following rituximab. In these patients the rate of clinically relevant infection while on

rituximab was 6.01 per 100 patient years compared to 4.97 per 100 patient years following treatment with the biologic DMARD.

4.6 Fertility, pregnancy and lactation

Contraception in males and females

Due to the long retention time of rituximab in B cell depleted patients, women of childbearing potential should use effective contraceptive methods during and for 12 months following treatment with rituximab.

Pregnancy

IgG immunoglobulins are known to cross the placental barrier.
B cell levels in human neonates following maternal exposure to rituximab have not been studied in clinical trials. There are no adequate and well-controlled data from studies in pregnant women, however transient B-cell depletion and lymphocytopenia have been reported in some infants born to mothers exposed to rituximab during pregnancy. Similar effects have been observed in animal studies (see section 5.3). For these reasons rituximab should not be administered to pregnant women unless the possible benefit outweighs the potential risk.

Breast-feeding

Whether rituximab is excreted in human milk is not known. However, because maternal IgG is excreted in human milk, and rituximab was detectable in milk from lactating monkeys, women should not breastfeed while treated with rituximab and for 12 months following rituximab treatment.

Fertility

Animal studies did not reveal deleterious effects of rituximab on reproductive organs.

4.7 Effects on ability to drive and use machines

No studies on the effects of rituximab on the ability to drive and use machines have been performed, although the pharmacological activity and adverse reactions reported to date suggest that rituximab would have no or negligible influence on the ability to drive and use machines.

4.8 Undesirable effects

Summary of the safety profile (non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia)

The overall safety profile of rituximab in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and CLL is based on data from patients from clinical trials and from post-marketing surveillance. These patients were treated either with rituximab monotherapy (as induction treatment or maintenance treatment following induction treatment) or in combination with chemotherapy.

The most frequently observed adverse drug reactions (ADRs) in patients receiving rituximab were IRRs which occurred in the majority of patients during the first infusion. The incidence of infusion-related symptoms decreases substantially with subsequent infusions and is less than 1% after eight doses of rituximab.

Infectious events (predominantly bacterial and viral) occurred in approximately 30-55% of patients during clinical trials in patients with NHL and in 30-50% of patients during clinical trials in patients with CLL

The most frequent reported or observed serious adverse drug reactions were:
- IRRs (including cytokine-release syndrome, tumour-lysis syndrome), see section 4.4.

- Infections, see section 4.4.
- Cardiovascular events, see section 4.4.

Other serious ADRs reported include hepatitis B reactivation and PML (see section 4.4.)

Tabulated list of adverse reactions

The frequencies of ADRs reported with rituximab alone or in combination with chemotherapy are summarised in Table 1. Within each frequency grouping, undesirable effects are presented in order of decreasing seriousness. Frequencies are defined as very common (≥ 1/10), common (≥ 1/100 to < 1/10), uncommon (≥ 1/1,000 to < 1/100), rare (≥ 1/10,000 to < 1/1000), very rare (< 1/10,000) and not known (cannot be estimated from the available data).

The ADRs identified only during post-marketing surveillance, and for which a frequency could not be estimated, are listed under "not known".

Table 1 ADRs reported in clinical trials or during post-marketing surveillance in patients with NHL and CLL disease treated with rituximab monotherapy/maintenance or in combination with chemotherapy

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Not known
Infections and infestations	bacterial infection, viral infections, [+]bronchitis	sepsis, [+]pneumonia, [+]febrile infection, [+]herpes zoster, [+]respiratory tract infection, fungal infections, infections of unknown aetiology, [+]acute bronchitis, [+]sinusitis, hepatitis B[1]		serious viral infection[2], Pneumocystis jiroveci	PML	
Blood and lymphatic system disorders	neutropenia, leucopenia, [+]febrile neutropenia, [+]thrombocytopenia	anaemia, [+]pancytopenia, [+]granulocytopenia	coagulation disorders, aplastic anaemia, haemolytic anaemia, lymphadenopathy		transient increase in serum IgM levels[3]	late neutropenia[3]
Immune system disorders	infusion related reactions[4], angioedema	hypersensitivity		anaphylaxis	tumour lysis syndrome, cytokine release syndrome[4], serum sickness	infusion-related acute reversible thrombocytopenia[4]
Metabolism and nutrition disorders		hyperglycaemia, weight decrease, peripheral oedema, face oedema, increased LDH, hypocalcaemia				
Psychiatric disorders			depression, nervousness,			
Nervous system disorders		paraesthesia, hypoaesthesia, agitation,	dysgeusia		peripheral neuropathy, facial nerve	cranial neuropathy, loss of other

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Not known
		insomnia, vasodilatation, dizziness, anxiety			palsy[5]	senses[5]
Eye disorders		lacrimation disorder, conjunctivitis			severe vision loss[5]	
Ear and labyrinth disorders		tinnitus, ear pain				hearing loss[5]
Cardiac disorders		[+]myocardial infarction[4 and 6], arrhythmia, [+]atrial fibrillation, tachycardia, [+]cardiac disorder	[+]left ventricular failure, [+]supraventri-cular tachycardia, +ventricular tachycardia, +angina, +myocardial ischaemia, bradycardia	severe cardiac disoders[4 and 6]	heart failure[4 and 6]	
Vascular disorders		hypertension, orthostatic hypotension, hypotension			vasculitis (predominatel y cutaneous), leukocytoclast ic vasculiti	
Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders		bronchospasm[4], respiratory disease, chest pain, dyspnoea, increased cough, rhinitis	asthma, bronchiolitis obliterans, lung disorder, hypoxia	interstitial lung disease[7]	respiratory failure[4]	lung infiltration
Gastrointesti nal disorders	nausea	vomiting , diarrhoea, abdominal pain, dysphagia, stomatitis, constipation, dyspepsia, anorexia, throat irritation	abdominal enlargement		gastro-intestin al perforation[7]	
Skin and Subcutaneous tissue disorders	pruritus, rash, [+]alopecia	urticaria, sweating, night sweats, [+]skin disorder			severe bullous skin reactions, Stevens-Johns on Syndrome toxic epidermal necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome)[7],	
Musculoskele tal, connective tissue and bone disorders		hypertonia, myalgia, arthralgia, back pain, neck pain, pain				
Renal and urinary disorders					renal failure[4]	
General disorders and administratio nsite conditions	fever , chills, asthenia, headache	tumour pain, flushing, malaise, cold syndrome, [+]fatigue, [+]shivering,	infusion site pain			

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Not known
		[+]multi-organ failure[4]				
Investigations	decreased IgG levels					

For each term, the frequency count was based on reactions of all grades (from mild to severe), except for terms marked with "+" where the frequency count was based only on severe (≥ grade 3 NCI common toxicity criteria) reactions. Only the highest frequency observed in the trials is reported

[1] includes reactivation and primary infections; frequency based on R-FC regimen in relapsed/refractory CLL

[2] see also section infection below

[3] see also section haematologic adverse reactions below

[4] see also section infusion-related reactions below. Rarely fatal cases reported

[5] signs and symptoms of cranial neuropathy. Occurred at various times up to several months after completion of rituximab therapy

[6] observed mainly in patients with prior cardiac condition and/or cardiotoxic chemotherapy and were mostly associated with infusion-related reactions

[7] includes fatal cases

The following terms have been reported as adverse events during clinical trials, however, were reported at a similar or lower incidence in the rituximab-arms compared to control arms: haematotoxicity, neutropenic infection, urinary tract infection, sensory disturbance, pyrexia.

Description of selected adverse reactions

Signs and symptoms suggestive of an infusion-related reaction were reported in more than 50% of patients in clinical trials, and were predominantly seen during the first infusion, usually in the first one to two hours. These symptoms mainly comprised fever, chills and rigors. Other symptoms included flushing, angioedema, bronchospasm, vomiting, nausea, urticaria/rash, fatigue, headache, throat irritation, rhinitis, pruritus, pain, tachycardia, hypertension, hypotension, dyspnoea, dyspepsia, asthenia and features of tumour lysis syndrome. Severe infusion-related reactions (such as bronchospasm, hypotension) occurred in up to 12% of the cases. Additional reactions reported in some cases were myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary oedema and acute reversible thrombocytopenia. Exacerbations of pre-existing cardiac conditions such as angina pectoris or congestive heart failure or severe cardiac disorders (heart failure, myocardial infarction, atrial fibrillation), pulmonary oedema, multi-organ failure, tumour lysis syndrome, cytokine release syndrome, renal failure, and respiratory failure were reported at lower or unknown frequencies. The incidence of infusion-related symptoms decreased substantially with subsequent infusions and is <1% of patients by the eighth cycle of rituximab-containing treatment.

Infections

Rituximab induces B-cell depletion in about 70-80% of patients, but was associated with decreased serum immunoglobulins only in a minority of patients.

Localised candida infections as well as Herpes zoster were reported at a higher incidence in the rituximab-containing arm of randomised studies. Severe infections were reported in about 4% of patients treated with rituximab monotherapy. Higher frequencies of infections overall, including grade 3 or 4 infections, were observed during rituximab maintenance treatment up to 2 years when compared to observation. There was no cumulative toxicity in terms of infections reported over a 2 year treatment period. In addition, other serious viral infections either new, reactivated or exacerbated, some of which were fatal, have been reported with rituximab treatment. The majority of patients had received rituximab in combination with chemotherapy or as part of a haematopoetic stem cell transplant. Examples of these serious viral infections are infections caused by the herpes viruses (Cytomegalovirus, Varicella Zoster Virus and Herpes Simplex Virus), JC virus (progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML)) and hepatitis C virus. Cases of fatal PML that occurred after disease progression and retreatment have also been reported in clinical trials. Cases of hepatitis B reactivation,have been reported, the majority of which were in patients receiving rituximab in combination with

cytotoxic chemotherapy. In patients with relapsed/refractory CLL, the incidence of grade 3/4 hepatitis B infection (reactivation and primary infection) was 2% in R-FC vs 0% FC. Progression of Kaposi's sarcoma has been observed in rituximab-exposed patients with pre-existing Kaposi's sarcoma. These cases occurred in non-approved indications and the majority of patients were HIV positive.

Haematologic adverse reactions
In clinical trials with rituximab monotherapy given for 4 weeks, haematological abnormalities occurred in a minority of patients and were usually mild and reversible. Severe (grade 3/4) neutropenia was reported in 4.2%, anaemia in 1.1% and thrombocytopenia in 1.7% of the patients. During rituximab maintenance treatment for up to 2 years, leucopenia (5% vs. 2%, grade 3/4) and neutropenia (10% vs. 4%, grade 3/4) were reported at a higher incidence when compared to observation. The incidence of thrombocytopenia was low (<1% , grade 3/4) and was not different between treatment arms. During the treatment course in studies with rituximab in combination with chemotherapy, grade 3/4 leucopenia (R-CHOP 88% vs. CHOP 79%, R-FC 23% vs. FC 12%), neutropenia (R-CVP 24% vs. CVP 14%; R-CHOP 97% vs. CHOP 88%, R-FC 30% vs. FC 19% in previously untreated CLL), pancytopenia (R-FC 3% vs. FC 1% in previously untreated CLL) were usually reported with higher frequencies when compared to chemotherapy alone. However, the higher incidence of neutropenia in patients treated with rituximab and chemotherapy was not associated with a higher incidence of infections and infestations compared to patients treated with chemotherapy alone. Studies in previously untreated and relapsed/refractory CLL have established that in up to 25% of patients treated with R-FC neutropenia was prolonged (defined as neutrophil count remaining below $1x10^9$/L between day 24 and 42 after the last dose) or occurred with a late onset (defined as neutrophil count below $1x10^9$/L later than 42 days after last dose in patients with no previous prolonged neutropenia or who recovered prior to day 42) following treatment with rituximab plus FC. There were no differences reported for the incidence of anaemia. Some cases of late neutropenia occurring more than four weeks after the last infusion of rituximab were reported. In the CLL first-line study, Binet stage C patients experienced more adverse events in the R-FC arm compared to the FC arm (R-FC 83% vs. FC 71%). In the relapsed/refractory CLL study grade ¾ thrombocytopenia was reported in 11% of patients in the R-FC group compared to 9% of patients in the FC group.

In studies of rituximab in patients with Waldenstrom's macroglobulinaemia, transient increases in serum IgM levels have been observed following treatment initiation, which may be associated with hyperviscosity and related symptoms. The transient IgM increase usually returned to at least baseline level within 4 months.

Cardiovascular adverse reactions
Cardiovascular reactions during clinical trials with rituximab monotherapy were reported in 18.8% of patients with the most frequently reported events being hypotension and hypertension. Cases of grade 3 or 4 arrhythmia (including ventricular and supraventricular tachycardia) and angina pectoris during infusion were reported. During maintenance treatment, the incidence of grade 3/4 cardiac disorders was comparable between patients treated with rituximab and observation. Cardiac events were reported as serious adverse events (including atrial fibrillation, myocardial infarction, left ventricular failure, myocardial ischaemia) in 3% of patients treated with rituximab compared to <1% on observation. In studies evaluating rituximab in combination with chemotherapy, the incidence of grade 3 and 4 cardiac arrhythmias, predominantly supraventricular arrhythmias such as tachycardia and atrial flutter/fibrillation, was higher in the R-CHOP group (14 patients, 6.9%) as compared to the CHOP group (3 patients, 1.5%). All of these arrhythmias either occurred in the context of a rituximab infusion or were associated with predisposing conditions such as fever, infection, acute myocardial infarction or pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular disease. No difference between the R-CHOP and CHOP group was observed in the incidence of other grade 3 and 4 cardiac events including heart failure, myocardial disease and manifestations of coronary artery disease. In CLL, the overall incidence of grade 3 or 4 cardiac disorders was low both in the first-line study (4% R-FC, 3% FC) and in the relapsed/refractory study (4% R-FC, 4% FC).

Respiratory system

Cases of interstitial lung disease, some with fatal outcome, have been reported.

Neurologic disorders
During the treatment period (induction treatment phase comprising of R-CHOP for at most eight cycles), four patients (2 %) treated with R-CHOP, all with cardiovascular risk factors, experienced thromboembolic cerebrovascular accidents during the first treatment cycle. There was no difference between the treatment groups in the incidence of other thromboembolic events. In contrast, three patients (1.5 %) had cerebrovascular events in the CHOP group, all of which occurred during the follow-up period. In CLL, the overall incidence of grade 3 or 4 nervous system disorders was low both in the first-line study (4% R-FC, 4% FC) and in the relapsed/refractory study (3% R-FC, 3% FC).

Cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) / reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS) have been reported. Signs and symptoms included visual disturbance, headache, seizures and altered mental status, with or without associated hypertension. A diagnosis of PRES/RPLS requires confirmation by brain imaging. The reported cases had recognised risk factors for PRES/RPLS, including the patients' underlying disease, hypertension, immunosuppressive therapy and/or chemotherapy.

Gastrointestinal disorders
Gastrointestinal perforation in some cases leading to death has been observed in patients receiving rituximab for treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In the majority of these cases, rituximab was administered with chemotherapy.

IgG levels
In the clinical trial evaluating rituximab maintenance treatment in relapsed/refractory follicular lymphoma, median IgG levels were below the lower limit of normal (LLN) (<7 g/L) after induction treatment in both the observation and the rituximab groups. In the observation group, the median IgG level subsequently increased to above the LLN, but remained constant in the rituximab group. The proportion of patients with IgG levels below the LLN was about 60% in the rituximab group throughout the 2 year treatment period, while it decreased in the observation group (36% after 2 years).

A small number of spontaneous and literature cases of hypogammaglobulinaemia have been observed in paediatric patients treated with rituximab, in some cases severe and requiring long-term immunoglobulin substitution therapy. The consequences of long term B cell depletion in paediatric patients are unknown.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders
Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported very rarely.

Patient subpopulations - rituximab monotherapy
Elderly patients (≥ 65 years):
The incidence of ADRs of all grades and grade 3 /4 ADR was similar in elderly patients compared to younger patients (<65 years).

Bulky disease
There was a higher incidence of grade 3/4 ADRs in patients with bulky disease than in patients without bulky disease (25.6 % vs. 15.4 %). The incidence of ADRs of any grade was similar in these two groups.

Re-treatment
The percentage of patients reporting ADRs upon re-treatment with further courses of rituximab was similar to the percentage of patients reporting ADRs upon initial exposure (any grade and grade 3/4 ADRs).

Patient subpopulations - rituximab combination therapy
Elderly patients (≥ 65 years)
The incidence of grade 3/4 blood and lymphatic adverse events was higher in elderly patients compared to younger patients (<65 years), with previously untreated or relapsed/refractory CLL.

Summary of the safety profile (rheumatoid arthritis)

The overall safety profile of rituximab in rheumatoid arthritis is based on data from patients from clinical trials and from post-marketing surveillance.

The safety profile of rituximab in patients with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is summarised in the sections below. In clinical trials more than 3,100 patients received at least one treatment course and were followed for periods ranging from 6 months to over 5 years; approximately 2,400 patients received two or more courses of treatment with over 1,000 having received 5 or more courses. The safety information collected during post-marketing experience reflects the expected adverse reaction profile as seen in clinical trials for rituximab (see section 4.4).

Patients received 2 x 1,000 mg of rituximab separated by an interval of two weeks, in addition to methotrexate (10-25 mg/week). Rituximab infusions were administered after an intravenous infusion of 100 mg methylprednisolone; patients also received treatment with oral prednisone for 15 days.

Tabulated list of adverse reactions

Frequencies are defined as very common (≥1/10), common (≥1/100 to <1/10), uncommon (≥1/1,000 to <1/100) and very rare (<1/10,000). Within each frequency grouping, undesirable effects are presented in order of decreasing seriousness.

The most frequent adverse reactions considered due to receipt of rituximab were IRRs. The overall incidence of IRRs in clinical trials was 23% with the first infusion and decreased with subsequent infusions. Serious IRRs were uncommon (1.5% of patients) and were predominantly seen during the initial course. In addition to adverse reactions seen in RA clinical trials for rituximab, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) (see section 4.4) and serum sickness-like reaction have been reported during post marketing experience.

Table 2 Summary of adverse drug reactions reported in clinical trials or during post marketing surveillance occurring in patients with rheumatoid arthritis receiving rituximab

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very rare
Infections and infestations	upper respiratory tract infection, urinary tract infections	bronchitis, sinusitis, gastroenteritis, tinea pedis			PML, reactivation of hepatitis B
Blood and lymphatic system disorders		neutropenia[1]		late neutropenia[2]	serum sickness-like reaction
Immune system disorders	[3]infusion related reactions (hypertension, nausea, rash,		[3]infusion related reactions (generalised oedema,		

System organ class	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Very rare
General disorders and administration site conditions	pyrexia, pruritus, urticaria, throat irritation, hot flush, hypotension, rhinitis, rigors, tachycardia, fatigue, oropharyngeal pain, peripheral oedema, erythma)		bronchospasm, wheezing, laryngeal oedema, angioneurotic oedema, generalised pruritis, anaphylaxis, anaphylactoid reaction)		
Metabolism and nutritional Disorders		hypercholesterolemia			
Psychiatric disorders		depression, anxiety			
Nervous system disorders	headache	paraesthesia, migraine, dizziness, sciatica			
Cardiac disorders				angina pectoris, atrial fibrillation, heart failure, myocardial infarction	atrial flutter
Gastrointestinal disorders		dyspepsia, diarrhoea, gastro-oesophageal reflux, mouth ulceration, upper abdominal pain			
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders		alopecia			toxic epidermal necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome), Stevens-Johnson Syndrome[5]
Musculo-skeletal disorders		arthralgia / musculoskeletal pain, osteoarthritis, bursitis			
Investigations	decreased IgM levels[4]	decreased IgG levels[4]			

[1] Frequency category derived from laboratory values collected as part of routine laboratory monitoring in clinical trials
[2] Frequency category derived from post-marketing data.
[3] Reactions occurring during or within 24 hours of infusion. See also infusion-related reactions below. IRRs may occur as a result of hypersensitivity and/or to the mechanism of action.
[4] Includes observations collected as part of routine laboratory monitoring.
[5] Includes fatal cases

Description of selected adverse reactions

Multiple courses

Multiple courses of treatment are associated with a similar ADR profile to that observed following first exposure. The rate of all ADRs following first rituximab exposure was highest during the first 6 months and declined thereafter. This is mostly accounted for by IRRs (most frequent during the first treatment course), RA exacerbation and infections all of which were more frequent in the first 6 months of treatment.

Infusion-related reactions
The most frequent ADRs following receipt of rituximab in clinical studies were IRRs. Among the 3189 patients treated with rituximab, 1,135 (36%) experienced at least one IRR with 733/3,189 (23%) of patients experiencing an IRR following first infusion of the first exposure to rituximab. The incidence of IRRs declined with subsequent infusions. In clinical trials fewer than 1% (17/3189) of patients experienced a serious IRR. There were no CTC Grade 4 IRRs and no deaths due to IRRs in the clinical trials. The proportion of CTC Grade 3 events, and of IRRs leading to withdrawal decreased by course and were rare from course 3 onwards. Premedication with intravenous glucocorticoid significantly reduced the incidence and severity of IRRs (see sections 4.2 and 4.4). Severe IRRs with fatal outcome have been reported in the postmarketing setting.

In a trial designed to evaluate the safety of a more rapid rituximab infusion in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, patients with moderate-to-severe active RA who did not experience a serious IRR during or within 24 hours of their first studied infusion were allowed to receive a 2 hour intravenous infusion of rituximab. Patients with a history of a serious infusion reaction to a biologic therapy for RA were excluded from entry. The incidence, types and severity of IRRs were consistent with that observed historically. No serious IRRs were observed.

Infections
The overall rate of infection was approximately 94 per 100 patient years in rituximab treated patients. The infections were predominately mild to moderate and consisted mostly of upper respiratory tract infections and urinary tract infections. The incidence of infections that were serious or required IV antibiotics, was approximately 4 per 100 patient years. The rate of serious infections did not show any significant increase following multiple courses of rituximab. Lower respiratory tract infections (including pneumonia) have been reported during clinical trials, at a similar incidence in the rituximab-arms compared to control arms.

Cases of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy with fatal outcome have been reported following use of rituximab for the treatment of autoimmune diseases. This includes rheumatoid arthritis and off-label autoimmune diseases, including Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) and vasculitis.

In patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma receiving rituximab in combination with cytotoxic chemotherapy, cases of hepatitis B reactivation have been reported (see non-Hodgkin's lymphoma). Reactivation of hepatitis B infection has also been very rarely reported in rheumatoid arthritis patients receiving rituximab (see section 4.4).

Cardiovascular adverse reactions
Serious cardiac reactions were reported at a rate of 1.3 per 100 patient years in the rituximab treated patients compared to 1.3 per 100 patient years in placebo treated patients. The proportions of patients experiencing cardiac reactions (all or serious) did not increase over multiple courses.

Neurologic events
Cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS) have been reported. Signs and symptoms included visual disturbance, headache, seizures and altered mental status, with or without associated hypertension. A diagnosis of PRES/RPLS requires confirmation by brain imaging. The reported cases had recognised risk factors for PRES/RPLS, including the patients' underlying disease, hypertension, immunosuppressive therapy and/or chemotherapy.

Neutropenia
Events of neutropenia were observed with rituximab treatment, the majority of which were transient and mild or moderate in severity. Neutropenia can occur several months after the administration of rituximab (see section 4.4).

In placebo-controlled periods of clinical trials, 0.94% (13/1382) of rituximab treated patients and

0.27% (2/731) of placebo-treated patients developed severe neutropenia.

Neutropenic events, including severe late onset and persistent neutropenia, have been rarely reported in the post-marketing setting, some of which were associated with fatal infections.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders
Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported very rarely.

Laboratory abnormalities
Hypogammaglobulinaemia (IgG or IgM below the lower limit of normal) has been observed in RA patients treated with rituximab. There was no increased rate in overall infections or serious infections after the development of low IgG or IgM (see section 4.4).

A small number of spontaneous and literature cases of hypogammaglobulinaemia have been observed in paediatric patients treated with rituximab, in some cases severe and requiring long-term immunoglobulin substitution therapy. The consequences of long-term B cell depletion in paediatric patients are unknown.

Summary of the Safety Profile (granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis)

In the clinical trial in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangitis, 99 patients were treated with rituximab (375 mg/m^2, once weekly for 4 weeks) and glucocorticoids (see section 5.1).

Tabulated list of adverse reactions

The ADRs listed in Table 3 were all adverse events which occurred at an incidence of ≥ 5% in the rituximab group.

Table 3 Adverse drug reactions occurring at 6-months in ≥ 5% of patients receiving rituximab, and at a higher frequency than the comparator group, in the pivotal clinical study.

Body system **Adverse reaction**	**Rituximab (n=99)**
Infections and infestations	
Urinary tract infection	7%
Bronchitis	5%
Herpes zoster	5%
Nasopharyngitis	5%
Blood and lymphatic system disorders	
Thrombocytopenia	7%
Immune system disorders	
Cytokine release syndrome	5%
Metabolism and nutrition disorders	
Hyperkalaemia	5%
Psychiatric disorders	
Insomnia	14%
Nervous system disorders	
Dizziness	10%
Tremor	10%
Vascular disorders	
Hypertension	12%
Flushing	5%

Body system Adverse reaction	Rituximab (n=99)
Respiratory, thoracic and mediastinal disorders	
Cough	12%
Dyspnoea	11%
Epistaxis	11%
Nasal congestion	6%
Gastrointestinal disorders	
Diarrhoea	18%
Dyspepsia	6%
Constipation	5%
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	
Acne	7%
Musculoskeletal and connective tissue disorders	
Muscle spasms	18%
Arthralgia	15%
Back pain	10%
Muscle weakness	5%
Musculoskeletal pain	5%
Pain in extremities	5%
General disorders and administration site conditions	
Peripheral oedema	16%
Investigations	
Decreased haemoglobin	6%

Description of selected adverse drug reactions

Infusion related reactions
IRRs in the GPA and MPA clinical trial were defined as any adverse event occurring within 24 hours of an infusion and considered to be infusion-related by investigators in the safety population. Ninety nine patients were treated with rituximab and 12% experienced at least one IRR. All IRRs were CTC Grade 1 or 2. The most common IRRs included cytokine release syndrome, flushing, throat irritation, and tremor. Rituximab was given in combination with intravenous glucocorticoids which may reduce the incidence and severity of these events.

Infections
In the 99 rituximab patients, the overall rate of infection was approximately 237 per 100 patient years (95% CI 197-285) at the 6-month primary endpoint. Infections were predominately mild to moderate and consisted mostly of upper respiratory tract infections, herpes zoster and urinary tract infections.

The rate of serious infections was approximately 25 per 100 patient years. The most frequently reported serious infection in the rituximab group was pneumonia at a frequency of 4%.

Malignancies
The incidence of malignancy in rituximab treated patients in the granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis clinical study was 2.00 per 100 patient years at the study common closing date (when the final patient had completed the follow-up period). On the basis of standardised incidence ratios, the incidence of malignancies appears to be similar to that previously reported in patients with ANCA-associated vasculitis.

Cardiovascular adverse reactions
Cardiac events occurred at a rate of approximately 273 per 100 patient years (95% CI 149-470) at the 6-month primary endpoint. The rate of serious cardiac events was 2.1 per 100 patient years (95% CI 3-15). The most frequently reported events were tachycardia (4%) and atrial fibrillation (3%) (see section 4.4).

Neurologic events
Cases of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome (RPLS) have been reported in autoimmune conditions. Signs and symptoms included visual disturbance, headache, seizures and altered mental status, with or without associated hypertension. A diagnosis of PRES/RPLS requires confirmation by brain imaging. The reported cases had recognised risk factors for PRES/RPLS, including the patients' underlying disease, hypertension, immunosuppressive therapy and/or chemotherapy.

Hepatitis B reactivation
A small number of cases of hepatitis B reactivation, some with fatal outcome, have been reported in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients receiving rituximab in the post-marketing setting.

Hypogammaglobulinaemia
Hypogammaglobulinaemia (IgA, IgG or IgM below the lower limit of normal) has been observed in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients treated with rituximab. At 6 months, in the active-controlled, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, non-inferiority trial, in the rituximab group, 27%, 58% and 51% of patients with normal immunoglobulin levels at baseline, had low IgA, IgG and IgM levels, respectively compared to 25%, 50% and 46% in the cyclophosphamide group. There was no increased rate in overall infections or serious infections in patients with low IgA, IgG or IgM.

Neutropenia
In the active-controlled, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, non-inferiority trial of rituximab in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis, 24% of patients in the rituximab group (single course) and 23% of patients in the cyclophosphamide group developed CTC grade 3 or greater neutropenia. Neutropenia was not associated with an observed increase in serious infection in rituximab-treated patients. The effect of multiple rituximab courses on the development of neutropenia in granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis patients has not been studied in clinical trials.

Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders
Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (Lyell's Syndrome) and Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, some with fatal outcome, have been reported very rarely.

Reporting of suspected adverse reactions

Reporting suspected adverse reactions after authorisation of the medicinal product is important. It allows continued monitoring of the benefit/risk balance of the medicinal product. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions via the national reporting system listed in Appendix V.

4.9 Overdose

Limited experience with doses higher than the approved dose of intravenous rituximab formulation is available from clinical trials in humans. The highest intravenous dose of rituximab tested in humans to date is 5000 mg (2250 mg/m^2), tested in a dose escalation study in patients with CLL. No additional safety signals were identified.

Patients who experience overdose should have immediate interruption of their infusion and be closely

monitored.

In the post-marketing setting five cases of rituximab overdose have been reported. Three cases had no reported adverse event. The two adverse events that were reported were flu-like symptoms, with a dose of 1.8 g of rituximab and fatal respiratory failure, with a dose of 2 g of rituximab.

5. PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

5.1 Pharmacodynamic properties

Pharmacotherapeutic group: antineoplastic agents, monoclonal antibodies, ATC code: L01XC02

Rituzena is a biosimilar medicinal product. Detailed information is available on the website of the European Medicines Agency http://www.ema.europa.eu.

Rituximab binds specifically to the transmembrane antigen, CD20, a non-glycosylated phosphoprotein, located on pre-B and mature B lymphocytes. The antigen is expressed on >95 % of all B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphomas.

CD20 is found on both normal and malignant B cells, but not on haematopoietic stem cells, pro-B cells, normal plasma cells or other normal tissue. This antigen does not internalize upon antibody binding and is not shed from the cell surface. CD20 does not circulate in the plasma as a free antigen and, thus, does not compete for antibody binding.

The Fab domain of rituximab binds to the CD20 antigen on B lymphocytes and the Fc domain can recruit immune effector functions to mediate B cell lysis. Possible mechanisms of effector-mediated cell lysis include complement-dependent cytotoxicity (CDC) resulting from C1q binding, and antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity (ADCC) mediated by one or more of the Fcγ receptors on the surface of granulocytes, macrophages and NK cells. Rituximab binding to CD20 antigen on B lymphocytes has also been demonstrated to induce cell death via apoptosis.

Peripheral B cell counts declined below normal following completion of the first dose of rituximab. In patients treated for haematological malignancies, B cell recovery began within 6 months of treatment and generally returned to normal levels within 12 months after completion of therapy, although in some patients this may take longer (up to a median recovery time of 23 months post-induction therapy). In patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis, the number of peripheral blood B cells decreased to <10 cells/µL after two weekly infusions of rituximab 375 mg/m^2, and remained at that level in most patients up to the 6 month time point. The majority of patients (81%) showed signs of B cell return, with counts >10 cells/µL by month 12, increasing to 87% of patients by month 18.

Clinical experience in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and in chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Follicular lymphoma

Monotherapy

Initial treatment, weekly for 4 doses
In the pivotal trial, 166 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant low-grade or follicular B cell NHL received 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as an intravenous infusion once weekly for four weeks. The overall response rate (ORR) in the intent-to-treat (ITT) population was 48 % (CI_{95}% 41% - 56%) with a 6% complete response (CR) and a 42% partial response (PR) rate. The projected median time to progression (TTP) for responding patients was 13.0 months. In a subgroup analysis, the ORR was higher in patients with IWF B, C, and D histological subtypes as compared to IWF A subtype (58% vs. 12%), higher in patients whose largest lesion was < 5 cm vs. > 7 cm in greatest diameter (53% vs. 38%), and higher in patients with chemosensitive relapse as compared to chemoresistant (defined as

duration of response < 3 months) relapse (50% vs. 22%). ORR in patients previously treated with autologous bone marrow transplant (ABMT) was 78% versus 43% in patients with no ABMT. Neither age, sex, lymphoma grade, initial diagnosis, presence or absence of bulky disease, normal or high LDH nor presence of extranodal disease had a statistically significant effect (Fisher's exact test) on response to rituximab. A statistically significant correlation was noted between response rates and bone marrow involvement. 40% of patients with bone marrow involvement responded compared to 59% of patients with no bone marrow involvement (p=0.0186). This finding was not supported by a stepwise logistic regression analysis in which the following factors were identified as prognostic factors: histological type, bcl-2 positivity at baseline, resistance to last chemotherapy and bulky disease.

Initial treatment, weekly for 8 doses
In a multicentre, single-arm trial, 37 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant, low grade or follicular B cell NHL received 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as intravenous infusion weekly for eight doses. The ORR was 57% (95% Confidence interval (CI); 41% – 73%; CR 14%, PR 43%) with a projected median TTP for responding patients of 19.4 months (range 5.3 to 38.9 months).

Initial treatment, bulky disease, weekly for 4 doses
In pooled data from three trials, 39 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant, bulky disease (single lesion ≥ 10 cm in diameter), low grade or follicular B cell NHL received 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as intravenous infusion weekly for four doses. The ORR was 36 % (CI_{95}% 21% – 51%; CR 3%, PR 33%) with a median TTP for responding patients of 9.6 months (range 1.5 to 26.8 months).

Re-treatment, weekly for 4 doses
In a multicentre, single-arm trial, 58 patients with relapsed or chemoresistant low grade or follicular B cell NHL, who had achieved an objective clinical response to a prior course of rituximab, were re-treated with 375 mg/m^2 of rituximab as intravenous infusion weekly for four doses. Three of the patients had received two courses of rituximab before enrolment and thus were given a third course in the study. Two patients were re-treated twice in the study. For the 60 re-treatments on study, the ORR was 38% (CI_{95} % 26% – 51%; 10% CR, 28% PR) with a projected median TTP for responding patients of 17.8 months (range 5.4 – 26.6). This compares favourably with the TTP achieved after the prior course of rituximab (12.4 months).

Initial treatment, in combination with chemotherapy

In an open-label randomised trial, a total of 322 previously untreated patients with follicular lymphoma were randomised to receive either CVP chemotherapy (cyclophosphamide 750 mg/m^2, vincristine 1.4 mg/m^2 up to a maximum of 2 mg on day 1, and prednisolone 40 mg/m^2/day on days 1 -5) every 3 weeks for 8 cycles or rituximab 375 mg/m^2 in combination with CVP (R-CVP). Rituximab was administered on the first day of each treatment cycle. A total of 321 patients (162 R-CVP, 159 CVP) received therapy and were analysed for efficacy. The median follow up of patients was 53 months. R-CVP led to a significant benefit over CVP for the primary endpoint, time to treatment failure (27 months vs. 6.6 months, p < 0.0001, log-rank test). The proportion of patients with a tumour response (CR, CRu, PR) was significantly higher (p< 0.0001 Chi-Square test) in the R-CVP group (80.9%) than the CVP group (57.2%). Treatment with R-CVP significantly prolonged the time to disease progression or death compared to CVP, 28.6 months and 14.7 months, respectively (p < 0.0001, log-rank test). The median duration of response was 37.7 months in the R-CVP group and was 13.5 months in the CVP group (p < 0.0001, log-rank test).

The difference between the treatment groups with respect to overall survival showed a significant clinical difference (p=0.029, log-rank test stratified by centre): survival rates at 53 months were 80.9% for patients in the R-CVP group compared to 71.1 % for patients in the CVP group.

Results from three other randomised trials using rituximab in combination with chemotherapy regimen other than CVP (CHOP, MCP, CHVP/Interferon-α) have also demonstrated significant improvements in response rates, time-dependent parameters as well as in overall survival. Key

results from all four studies are summarised in table 4.

Table 4 Summary of key results from four phase III randomised studies evaluating the benefit of rituximab with different chemotherapy regimens in follicular lymphoma

Study	Treatment, N	Median FU, months	ORR, %	CR,%	Median TTF/PFS/ EFS mo	OS rates, %
M39021	CVP, 159 R-CVP, 162	53	57 81	10 41	Median TTP: 14.7 33.6 P<0.0001	53-months 71.1 80.9 p=0.029
GLSG'00	CHOP, 205 R-CHOP, 223	18	90 96	17 20	Median TTF: 2.6 years Not reached p < 0.001	18-months 90 95 p = 0.016
OSHO-39	MCP, 96 R-MCP, 105	47	75 92	25 50	Median PFS: 28.8 Not reached p < 0.0001	48-months 74 87 p = 0.0096
FL2000	CHVP-IFN, 183 R-CHVP-IFN, 175	42	85 94	49 76	Median EFS: 36 Not reached p < 0.0001	42-months 84 91 p = 0.029

EFS – Event Free Survival
TTP – Time to progression or death
PFS – Progression-Free Survival
TTF – Time to Treatment Failure
OS rates – survival rates at the time of the analyses

Diffuse large B cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

In a randomised, open-label trial a total of 399 previously untreated elderly patients (age 60 to 80 years) with diffuse large B cell lymphoma received standard CHOP chemotherapy (cyclophosphamide 750 mg/m^2, doxorubicin 50 mg/m^2, vincristine 1.4 mg/m^2 up to a maximum of 2 mg on day 1, and prednisolone 40 mg/m^2/day on days 1-5) every 3 weeks for eight cycles, or rituximab 375 mg/m^2 plus CHOP (R-CHOP). Rituzena was administered on the first day of the treatment cycle.

The final efficacy analysis included all randomised patients (197 CHOP, 202 R-CHOP), and had a median follow-up duration of approximately 31 months. The two treatment groups were well balanced in baseline disease characteristics and disease status. The final analysis confirmed that R-CHOP treatment was associated with a clinically relevant and statistically significant improvement in the duration of event-free survival (the primary efficacy parameter; where events were death, relapse or progression of lymphoma, or institution of a new anti-lymphoma treatment) (p = 0.0001). Kaplan Meier estimates of the median duration of event-free survival were 35 months in the R-CHOP arm compared to 13 months in the CHOP arm, representing a risk reduction of 41 %. At 24 months, estimates for overall survival were 68.2 % in the R-CHOP arm compared to 57.4 % in the CHOP arm. A subsequent analysis of the duration of overall survival, carried out with a median follow-up duration of 60 months, confirmed the benefit of R-CHOP over CHOP treatment (p=0.0071), representing a risk reduction of 32 %.

The analysis of all secondary parameters (response rates, progression-free survival, disease-free survival, duration of response) verified the treatment effect of R-CHOP compared to CHOP. The complete response rate after cycle 8 was 76.2 % in the R-CHOP group and 62.4 % in the CHOP

group (p=0.0028). The risk of disease progression was reduced by 46 % and the risk of relapse by 51 %. In all patients subgroups (gender, age, age adjusted IPI, Ann Arbor stage, ECOG, β2 microglobulin, LDH, albumin, B symptoms, bulky disease, extranodal sites, bone marrow involvement), the risk ratios for event-free survival and overall survival (R-CHOP compared with CHOP) were less than 0.83 and 0.95 respectively. R-CHOP was associated with improvements in outcome for both high- and low-risk patients according to age adjusted IPI.

Clinical laboratory findings

Of 67 patients evaluated for human anti-mouse antibody (HAMA), no responses were noted. Of 356 patients evaluated for HACA, 1.1 % (4 patients) were positive.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

In two open-label randomised trials, a total of 817 previously untreated patients and 552 patients with relapsed/refractory CLL were randomised to receive either FC chemotherapy (fludarabine 25 mg/m^2, cyclophosphamide 250 mg/m^2, days 1-3) every 4 weeks for 6 cycles or rituximab in combination with FC (R-FC). Rituximab was administered at a dosage of 375 mg/m^2 during the first cycle one day prior to chemotherapy and at a dosage of 500 mg/m^2 on day 1 of each subsequent treatment cycle. Patients were excluded from the study in relapsed/refractory CLL if they had previously been treated with monoclonal antibodies or if they were refractory (defined as failure to achieve a partial remission for at least 6 months) to fludarabine or any nucleoside analogue. A total of 810 patients (403 R-FC, 407 FC) for the first-line study (Table 5a and Table 5b) and 552 patients (276 R-FC, 276 FC) for the relapsed/refractory study (Table 6) were analysed for efficacy.

In the first-line study, after a median observation time of 48.1 months, the median PFS was 55 months in the R-FC group and 33 months in the FC group ($p < 0.0001$, log-rank test). The analysis of overall survival showed a significant benefit of R-FC treatment over FC chemotherapy alone ($p = 0.0319$, log-rank test) (Table 5a). The benefit in terms of PFS was consistently observed in most patient subgroups analysed according to disease risk at baseline (i.e. Binet stages A-C) (Table 5b).

Table 5a First-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia Overview of efficacy results for rituximab plus FC vs. FC alone - 48.1 months median observation time

Efficacy parameter	Kaplan-Meier estimate of median time to event (months)			Risk reduction
	FC (N = 409)	R-FC (N=408)	Log-rank p value	
Progression-free survival (PFS)	32.8	55.3	<0.0001	45%
Overall survival	NR	NR	0.0319	27%
Event free survival	31.3	51.8	<0.0001	44%
Response rate (CR, nPR, or PR) CR rates	72.6% 16.9%	85.8% 36.0%	<0.0001 <0.0001	n.a. n.a.
Duration of response*	36.2	57.3	<0.0001	44%
Disease free survival (DFS)**	48.9	60.3	0.0520	31%
Time to new treatment	47.2	69.7	<0.0001	42%

Response rate and CR rates analysed using Chi-squared Test. NR: not reached; n.a.: not applicable
*: only applicable to patients achieving a CR, nPR, PR
**: only applicable to patients achieving a CR

Table 5b First-line treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia Hazard ratios of progression-free survival according to Binet stage (ITT) - 48.1 months median observation time

	Number of patients	Hazard ratio (95% CI)	p-value (Wald test, not

Progression-free survival (PFS)	FC	R-FC		adjusted)
Binet stage A	22	18	0.39 (0.15; 0.98)	0.0442
Binet stage B	259	263	0.52 (0.41; 0.66)	<0.0001
Binet stage C	126	126	0.68 (0.49; 0.95)	0.0224

CI: Confidence Interval

In the relapsed/refractory study, the median progression-free survival (primary endpoint) was 30.6 months in the R-FC group and 20.6 months in the FC group (p=0.0002, log-rank test). The benefit in terms of PFS was observed in almost all patient subgroups analysed according to disease risk at baseline. A slight but not significant improvement in overall survival was reported in the R-FC compared to the FC arm.

Table 6 Treatment of relapsed/refractory chronic lymphocytic leukaemia - overview of efficacy results for rituximab plus FC vs. FC alone (25.3 months median observation time)

Efficacy parameter	Kaplan-Meier estimate of median time to event (months)			Risk reduction
	FC (N = 276)	R-FC (N=276	Log-Rank p	
Progression-free survival (PFS)	20.6	30.6	0.0002	35%
Overall survival	51.9	NR	0.2874	17%
Event free survival	19.3	28.7	0.0002	36%
Response rate (CR, nPR, or PR)	58.0%	69.9%	0.0034	n.a.
CR rates	13.0%	24.3%	0.0007	n.a.
Duration of response *	27.6	39.6	0.0252	31%
Disease free survival (DFS)**	42.2	39.6	0.8842	-6%
Time to new CLL treatment	34.2	NR	0.0024	35%

Response rate and CR rates analysed using Chi-squared Test. NR: not reached n.a. not applicable
*: only applicable to patients achieving a CR, nPR, PR;
**: only applicable to patients achieving a CR;

Results from other supportive studies using rituximab in combination with other chemotherapy regimens (including CHOP, FCM, PC, PCM, bendamustine and cladribine) for the treatment of previously untreated and/or relapsed/refractory CLL patients have also demonstrated high overall response rates with benefit in terms of PFS rates, albeit with modestly higher toxicity (especially myelotoxicity). These studies support the use of rituximab with any chemotherapy.

Data in approximately 180 patients pre-treated with rituximab have demonstrated clinical benefit (including CR) and are supportive for rituximab re-treatment.

Paediatric population

The European Medicines Agency has waived the obligation to submit the results of studies with rituximab in all subsets of the paediatric population with follicular lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukaemia. See section 4.2 for information on paediatric use.

Clinical experience in granulomatosis with polyangiitis (Wegener's) and microscopic polyangiitis

A total of 197 patients aged 15 years or older with severely, active granulomatosis with polyangiitis

(75%) and microscopic polyangiitis (24%) were enrolled and treated in an active-comparator, randomised, double-blind, multicentre, non-inferiority trial.

Patients were randomised in a 1:1 ratio to receive either oral cyclophosphamide daily (2mg/kg/day) for 3-6 months or rituximab (375 mg/m^2) once weekly for 4 weeks. All patients in the cyclophosphamide arm received azathioprine maintenance therapy during follow-up. Patients in both arms received 1000mg of pulse intravenous (IV) methylprednisolone (or another equivalent-dose glucocorticoid) per day for 1 to 3 days, followed by oral prednisone (1 mg/kg/day, not exceeding 80 mg/day). Prednisone tapering was to be completed by 6 months from the start of study treatment.

The primary outcome measure was achievement of complete remission at 6 months defined as a Birmingham Vasculitis Activity Score for Wegener's granulomatosis (BVAS/WG) of 0, and off glucocorticoid therapy. The prespecified non-inferiority margin for the treatment difference was 20%. The trial demonstrated non-inferiority of rituximab to cyclophosphamide for complete remission (CR) at 6 months (Table 7).

Efficacy was observed both for patients with newly diagnosed disease and for patients with relapsing disease (Table 8).

Table 7 Percentage of patients who achieved complete remission at 6 months (Intent-to-treat population*)

	Rituximab (n = 99)	**Cyclophosphamide (n = 98)**	**Treatment difference (Rituximab --cyclophosphamide)**
Rate	63.6%	53.1%	10.6% 95.1%[b] CI (−3.2%, 24.3%) [a]

– CI = confidence interval.
– * Worst case imputation
[a] Non-inferiority was demonstrated since the lower bound (−3.2%) was higher than the pre-determined non-inferiority margin (− 20%).
[b] The 95.1% confidence level reflects an additional 0.001 alpha to account for an interim efficacy analysis.

Table 8 Complete remission at 6-months by disease status

	Rituximab	**Cyclophosphamide**	**Difference (CI 95%)**
All patients **Newly diagnosed**	n=99 n=48 n=51	n=98 n=48 n=50	
Complete remission			
All Patients	63.6%	53.1%	10.6% (-3.2, 24.3)
Newly diagnosed	60.4%	64.6%	− 4.2% (− 23.6, 15.3)
Relapsing	66.7%	42.0%	24.7% (5.8, 43.6)

Worst case imputation is applied for patients with missing data

Complete remission at 12 and 18 months
In the rituximab group, 48% of patients achieved CR at 12 months, and 39% of patients achieved CR at 18 months. In patients treated with cyclophosphamide (followed by azathioprine for maintenance of complete remission), 39% of patients achieved CR at 12 months, and 33% of patients achieved CR at 18 months. From month 12 to month 18, 8 relapses were observed in the rituximab group compared with four in the cyclophosphamide group.

Retreatment with rituximab
Based upon investigator judgment, 15 patients received a second course of rituximab therapy for treatment of relapse of disease activity which occurred between 6 and 18 months after the first course of rituximab. The limited data from the present trial preclude any conclusions regarding the

efficacy of subsequent courses of rituximab in patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis.

Continued immunosuppressive therapy may be especially appropriate in patients at risk for relapses (i.e. with history of earlier relapses and granulomatosis with polyangiitis, or patients with reconstitution of B-lymphocytes in addition to PR3-ANCA at monitoring). When remission with rituximab has been achieved, continued immunosuppressive therapy may be considered to prevent relapse. The efficacy and safety of rituximab in maintenance therapy has not been established.

Laboratory evaluations

A total of 23/99 (23%) rituximab-treated patients in the trial tested positive for HACA by 18 months. None of the 99 rituximab-treated patients were HACA positive at screening. The clinical relevance of HACA formation in rituximab-treated patients is unclear.

5.2 Pharmacokinetic properties

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Based on a population pharmacokinetic analysis in 298 NHL patients who received single or multiple infusions of rituximab as a single agent or in combination with CHOP therapy (applied rituximab doses ranged from 100 to 500 mg/m^2), the typical population estimates of nonspecific clearance (CL_1), specific clearance (CL_2) likely contributed by B cells or tumour burden, and central compartment volume of distribution (V_1) were 0.14 L/day, 0.59 L/day, and 2.7 L, respectively. The estimated median terminal elimination half-life of rituximab was 22 days (range, 6.1 to 52 days). Baseline CD19-positive cell counts and size of measurable tumour lesions contributed to some of the variability in CL_2 of rituximab in data from 161 patients given 375 mg/m^2 as an intravenous infusion for 4 weekly doses. Patients with higher CD19-positive cell counts or tumour lesions had a higher CL_2. However, a large component of inter-individual variability remained for CL_2 after correction for CD19-positive cell counts and tumour lesion size. V_1 varied by body surface area (BSA) and CHOP therapy. This variability in V_1 (27.1% and 19.0%) contributed by the range in BSA (1.53 to 2.32 m^2) and concurrent CHOP therapy, respectively, were relatively small. Age, gender and WHO performance status had no effect on the pharmacokinetics of rituximab. This analysis suggests that dose adjustment of rituximab with any of the tested covariates is not expected to result in a meaningful reduction in its pharmacokinetic variability.

Rituximab, administered as an intravenous infusion at a dose of 375 mg/m^2 at weekly intervals for 4 doses to 203 patients with NHL naive to rituximab, yielded a mean C_{max} following the fourth infusion of 486 µg/mL (range, 77.5 to 996.6 µg/mL). Rituximab was detectable in the serum of patients 3 – 6 months after completion of last treatment.

Upon administration of rituximab at a dose of 375 mg/m^2 as an intravenous infusion at weekly intervals for 8 doses to 37 patients with NHL, the mean C_{max} increased with each successive infusion, spanning from a mean of 243 µg/mL (range, 16 – 582 µg/mL) after the first infusion to 550 µg/mL (range, 171 – 1177 µg/mL) after the eighth infusion.

The pharmacokinetic profile of rituximab when administered as 6 infusions of 375 mg/m^2 in combination with 6 cycles of CHOP chemotherapy was similar to that seen with rituximab alone.

Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Rituximab was administered as an intravenous infusion at a first-cycle dose of 375 mg/m^2 increased to 500 mg/m^2 each cycle for 5 doses in combination with fludarabine and cyclophosphamide in CLL patients. The mean C_{max} (N=15) was 408 µg/mL (range, 97 – 764 µg/mL) after the fifth 500 mg/m^2 infusion and the mean terminal half-life was 32 days (range, 14 – 62 days).

Rheumatoid arthritis

Following two intravenous infusions of rituximab at a dose of 1000 mg, two weeks apart, the mean terminal half-life was 20.8 days (range, 8.58 to 35.9 days), mean systemic clearance was 0.23 L/day (range, 0.091 to 0.67 L/day), and mean steady-state distribution volume was 4.6 L (range, 1.7 to 7.51 L). Population pharmacokinetic analysis of the same data gave similar mean values for systemic clearance and half-life, 0.26 L/day and 20.4 days, respectively. Population pharmacokinetic analysis revealed that BSA and gender were the most significant covariates to explain inter-individual variability in pharmacokinetic parameters. After adjusting for BSA, male subjects had a larger volume of distribution and a faster clearance than female subjects. The gender- related pharmacokinetic differences are not considered to be clinically relevant and dose adjustment is not required. No pharmacokinetic data are available in patients with hepatic or renal impairment.

The pharmacokinetics of rituximab were assessed following two intravenous (IV) doses of 500 mg and 1000 mg on Days 1 and 15 in four studies. In all these studies, rituximab pharmacokinetics were dose proportional over the limited dose range studied. Mean Cmax for serum rituximab following first infusion ranged from 157 to 171 µg/mL for 2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 298 to 341 µg/mL for 2 x 1000 mg dose. Following second infusion, mean Cmax ranged from 183 to 198 µg/mL for the2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 355 to 404 µg/mL for the 2 x 1000 mg dose. Mean terminal elimination half-life ranged from 15 to 16 days for the 2 x 500 mg dose group and 17 to 21 days for the 2 x 1000 mg dose group. Mean Cmax was 16 to 19% higher following second infusion compared to the first infusion for both doses.

The pharmacokinetics of rituximab were assessed following two IV doses of 500 mg and 1000 mg upon re-treatment in the second course. Mean Cmax for serum rituximab following first infusion was 170 to 175 µg/mL for 2 x 500 mg dose and 317 to 370 µg/mL for 2 x 1000 mg dose. Cmax following second infusion, was 207 µg/mL for the 2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 377 to 386 µg/mL for the 2 x 1000 mg dose. Mean terminal elimination half-life after the second infusion, following the second course, was 19 days for 2 x 500 mg dose and ranged from 21 to 22 days for the 2 x 1000 mg dose. PK parameters for rituximab were comparable over the two treatment courses.

The pharmacokinetic (PK) parameters in the anti-TNF inadequate responder population, following the same dosage regimen (2 x 1000 mg, IV, 2 weeks apart), were similar with a mean maximum serum concentration of 369 µg/mL and a mean terminal half-life of 19.2 days.

Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis

Based on the population pharmacokinetic analysis of data in 97 patients with granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis who received 375 mg/m^2 rituximab once weekly for four doses, the estimated median terminal elimination half-life was 23 days (range, 9 to 49 days). Rituximab mean clearance and volume of distribution were 0.313 L/day (range, 0.116 to 0.726 L/day) and 4.50 L (range 2.25 to 7.39 L) respectively. The PK parameters of rituximab in these patients appear similar to what has been observed in rheumatoid arthritis patients.

5.3 Preclinical safety data

Rituximab has shown to be highly specific to the CD20 antigen on B cells. Toxicity studies in cynomolgus monkeys have shown no other effect than the expected pharmacological depletion of B cells in peripheral blood and in lymphoid tissue.

Developmental toxicity studies have been performed in cynomolgus monkeys at doses up to 100 mg/kg (treatment on gestation days 20-50) and have revealed no evidence of toxicity to the foetus due to rituximab. However, dose-dependent pharmacologic depletion of B cells in the lymphoid organs of the foetuses was observed, which persisted post natally and was accompanied by a decrease in IgG level in the newborn animals affected. B cell counts returned to normal in these animals within 6 months of birth and did not compromise the reaction to immunisation.

Standard tests to investigate mutagenicity have not been carried out, since such tests are not relevant for this molecule. No long-term animal studies have been performed to establish the carcinogenic potential of rituximab.

Specific studies to determine the effects of rituximab on fertility have not been performed. In general toxicity studies in cynomolgus monkeys no deleterious effects on reproductive organs in males or females were observed.

6. PHARMACEUTICAL PARTICULARS

6.1 List of excipients

Sodium chloride
Tri-sodium citrate dihydrate
Polysorbate 80
Water for injections

6.2 Incompatibilities

No incompatibilities between rituximab and polyvinyl chloride or polyethylene bags or infusion sets have been observed.

6.3 Shelf life

Unopened vial
4 years

Diluted product
The prepared infusion solution of rituximab is physically and chemically stable for 24 hours at 2 °C - 8 °C and subsequently 12 hours at room temperature (not more than 30 °C).

From a microbiological point of view, the prepared infusion solution should be used immediately. If not used immediately, in-use storage times and conditions prior to use are the responsibility of the user and would normally not be longer than 24 hours at 2 °C – 8 °C, unless dilution has taken place in controlled and validated aseptic conditions.

6.4 Special precautions for storage

Store in a refrigerator (2 °C – 8 °C). Keep the container in the outer carton in order to protect from light.

For storage conditions after dilution of the medicinal product, see section 6.3.

6.5 Nature and contents of container

Clear Type I glass vials with butyl rubber stopper containing 500 mg of rituximab in 50 mL. Pack of 1 vial.

6.6 Special precautions for disposal and other handling

Rituzena is provided in sterile, preservative-free, non-pyrogenic, single use vials.

Aseptically withdraw the necessary amount of Rituzena, and dilute to a calculated concentration of 1 to 4 mg/mL rituximab into an infusion bag containing sterile, pyrogen-free sodium chloride9 mg/mL (0.9%) solution for injection or 5 % D-Glucose in water. For mixing the solution, gently invert the bag in order to avoid foaming. Care must be taken to ensure the sterility of prepared

solutions. Since the medicinal product does not contain any anti-microbial preservative or bacteriostatic agents, aseptic technique must be observed. Parenteral medicinal products should be inspected visually for particulate matter and discolouration prior to administration.

Any unused medicinal product or waste material should be disposed of in accordance with local requirements.

7. MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER

Celltrion Healthcare Hungary Kft.
1062 Budapest
Váci út 1-3. WestEnd Office Building B torony
Hungary

8. MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER(S)

EU/1/17/1206/001

9. DATE OF FIRST AUTHORISATION/RENEWAL OF THE AUTHORISATION

Date of first authorisation: 13 July 2017
Date of latest renewal:

10. DATE OF REVISION OF THE TEXT

Detailed information on this medicinal product is available on the website of the European Medicines Agency http://www.ema.europa.eu/

ANNEX II

A. MANUFACTURER OF THE BIOLOGICAL ACTIVE SUBSTANCE AND MANUFACTURERS RESPONSIBLE FOR BATCH RELEASE

B. CONDITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS REGARDING SUPPLY AND USE

C. OTHER CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE MARKETING AUTHORISATION

D. CONDITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

A. MANUFACTURER OF THE BIOLOGICAL ACTIVE SUBSTANCE AND MANUFACTURERS RESPONSIBLE FOR BATCH RELEASE

Name and address of the manufacturer of the biological active substance

CELLTRION Inc.,
20 Academy–ro 51 beon-gil
Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, 22014, Republic of Korea

Name and address of the manufacturers responsible for batch release

Biotec Services International Ltd.
Biotec House, Central Park, Western Avenue
Bridgend Industrial Estate
Bridgend, CF31 3RT, UK

Units 2100, 2110, 2010, 2120, 2130 and 2500
Phase 18, Central Park
Bridgend Industrial Estate
Bridgend, CF31 3TY, UK

Millmount Healthcare Ltd.
Block 7, City North Business Campus,
Stamullen, Co. Meath K32 YD60, Ireland

The printed package leaflet of the medicinal product must state the name and address of the manufacturer responsible for the release of the concerned batch.

B. CONDITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS REGARDING SUPPLY AND USE

Medicinal product subject to restricted medical prescription (see Annex I: Summary of Product Characteristics, section 4.2).

C. OTHER CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE MARKETING AUTHORISATION

- **Periodic safety update reports**

The requirements for submission of periodic safety update reports for this medicinal product are set out in the list of Union reference dates (EURD list) provided for under Article 107c(7) of Directive 2001/83/EC and any subsequent updates published on the European medicines web-portal.

D. CONDITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE USE OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

- **Risk Management Plan (RMP)**

The MAH shall perform the required pharmacovigilance activities and interventions detailed in the agreed RMP presented in Module 1.8.2 of the marketing authorisation and any agreed subsequent updates of the RMP.

An updated RMP should be submitted:

- At the request of the European Medicines Agency;

- Whenever the risk management system is modified, especially as the result of new information being received that may lead to a significant change to the benefit/risk profile or as the result of an important (pharmacovigilance or risk minimisation) milestone being reached.

- **Additional risk minimisation measures**

Non-oncology indications:
The MAH must ensure that all physicians who are expected to prescribe Rituzena are provided with the following:
Product information
Physician information
Patient information
Patient Alert card

The Physician information about Rituzena should contain the following key elements:
- The need for close supervision during administration in an environment where full resuscitation facilities are immediately available
- The need to check, prior to Rituzena treatment, for infections, for immunosuppression, for prior/current medication affecting the immune system and recent history of, or planned, vaccination
- The need to monitor patients for infections, especially PML, during and after Rituzena treatment
- Detailed information on the risk of PML, the need for timely diagnosis of PML and appropriate measures to diagnose PML
- The need to advise patients on the risk of infections and PML, including the symptoms to be aware of and the need to contact their doctor immediately if they experience any.
- The need to provide patients with the Patient Alert Card with each infusion

The Patient information about Rituzena should contain the following key elements:
- Detailed information on the risk of infections and PML
- Information on the signs and symptoms of infections, especially PML, and the need to contact their doctor immediately if they experience any
- The importance of sharing this information with their partner or caregiver
- Information on the Patient Alert Card

The Patient Alert Card for Rituzena in non-oncology indications should contain the following key elements:
- The need to carry the card at all times and to show the card to all treating health care professionals
- Warning on the risk of infections and PML, including the symptoms
- The need for patients to contact their health care professional if symptoms occur

Oncology indications:
The MAH must ensure that all physicians who are expected to prescribe Rituzena are provided with the following:
Product information
Physician information

The Physician information about Rituzena should contain the following key elements:
- Information that the product should be administered as IV only to avoid administration route errors.

The Physician information and Patient information must be agreed with the National Competent Authorities prior to distribution and Patient Alert Card should be included as

part of inner packaging.

ANNEX III

LABELLING AND PACKAGE LEAFLET

A. LABELLING

PARTICULARS TO APPEAR ON THE OUTER PACKAGING

OUTER CARTON

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

Rituzena 100 mg concentrate for solution for infusion
Rituximab

2. STATEMENT OF ACTIVE SUBSTANCE(S)

1 vial contains 100 mg of rituximab
1 mL contains 10 mg of rituximab

3. LIST OF EXCIPIENTS

Excipients: sodium chloride, tri-sodium citrate dihydrate, polysorbate 80, water for injections.

4. PHARMACEUTICAL FORM AND CONTENTS

Concentrate for solution for infusion
100 mg / 10 mL
2 vials

5. METHOD AND ROUTE(S) OF ADMINISTRATION

For intravenous use after dilution.
Read the package leaflet before use.

6. SPECIAL WARNING THAT THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT MUST BE STORED OUT OF THE SIGHT AND REACH OF CHILDREN

Keep out of the sight and reach of children.

7. OTHER SPECIAL WARNING(S), IF NECESSARY

8. EXPIRY DATE

EXP

9. SPECIAL STORAGE CONDITIONS

Store in a refrigerator. Keep the container in the outer carton, in order to protect from light.

10. SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR DISPOSAL OF UNUSED MEDICINAL PRODUCTS OR WASTE MATERIALS DERIVED FROM SUCH MEDICINAL PRODUCTS, IF APPROPRIATE

11. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER

Celltrion Healthcare Hungary Kft.
1062 Budapest
Váci út 1-3. WestEnd Office Building B torony
Hungary

12. MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER(S)

EU/1/17/1206/002

13. BATCH NUMBER

Lot

14. GENERAL CLASSIFICATION FOR SUPPLY

15. INSTRUCTIONS ON USE

16. INFORMATION IN BRAILLE

<Justification for not including Braille accepted.>

17. UNIQUE IDENTIFIER – 2D BARCODE

<2D barcode carrying the unique identifier included.>

18. UNIQUE IDENTIFIER - HUMAN READABLE DATA

PC:
SN:
NN:

MINIMUM PARTICULARS TO APPEAR ON SMALL IMMEDIATE PACKAGING UNITS

VIAL LABEL

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT AND ROUTE(S) OF ADMINISTRATION

Rituzena 100 mg concentrate for solution for infusion
Rituximab
Intravenous use

2. METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION

For intravenous use after dilution

3. EXPIRY DATE

EXP

4. BATCH NUMBER

Lot

5. CONTENTS BY WEIGHT, BY VOLUME OR BY UNIT

(10 mg/mL)
100 mg / 10 mL

6. OTHER

PARTICULARS TO APPEAR ON THE OUTER PACKAGING

OUTER CARTON

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

Rituzena 500 mg concentrate for solution for infusion
Rituximab

2. STATEMENT OF ACTIVE SUBSTANCE(S)

1 vial contains 500 mg of rituximab
1 mL contains 10 mg of rituximab

3. LIST OF EXCIPIENTS

Excipients: sodium chloride, tri-sodium citrate dihydrate, polysorbate 80, water for injections.

4. PHARMACEUTICAL FORM AND CONTENTS

Concentrate for solution for infusion
500 mg / 50 mL
1 vial

5. METHOD AND ROUTE(S) OF ADMINISTRATION

For intravenous use after dilution.
Read the package leaflet before use.

6. SPECIAL WARNING THAT THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT MUST BE STORED OUT OF THE SIGHT AND REACH OF CHILDREN

Keep out of the sight and reach of children.

7. OTHER SPECIAL WARNING(S), IF NECESSARY

8. EXPIRY DATE

EXP

9. SPECIAL STORAGE CONDITIONS

Store in a refrigerator. Keep the container in the outer carton, in order to protect from light.

10. SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR DISPOSAL OF UNUSED MEDICINAL PRODUCTS OR WASTE MATERIALS DERIVED FROM SUCH MEDICINAL PRODUCTS, IF APPROPRIATE

11. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER

Celltrion Healthcare Hungary Kft.
1062 Budapest
Váci út 1-3. WestEnd Office Building B torony
Hungary

12. MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER(S)

EU/1/17/1206/001

13. BATCH NUMBER

Lot

14. GENERAL CLASSIFICATION FOR SUPPLY

15. INSTRUCTIONS ON USE

16. INFORMATION IN BRAILLE

<Justification for not including Braille accepted.>

17. UNIQUE IDENTIFIER – 2D BARCODE

<2D barcode carrying the unique identifier included.>

18. UNIQUE IDENTIFIER - HUMAN READABLE DATA

PC:
SN:
NN:

MINIMUM PARTICULARS TO APPEAR ON SMALL IMMEDIATE PACKAGING UNITS

VIAL LABEL

1. NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT AND ROUTE(S) OF ADMINISTRATION

Rituzena 500 mg concentrate for solution for infusion
Rituximab
Intravenous use

2. METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION

For intravenous use after dilution

3. EXPIRY DATE

EXP

4. BATCH NUMBER

Lot

5. CONTENTS BY WEIGHT, BY VOLUME OR BY UNIT

(10 mg/mL)
500 mg / 50 mL

6. OTHER

PATIENT ALERT CARD TEXT FOR NON-ONCOLOGY INDICATIONS

Rituzena Alert Card for patients with non-oncology diseases

Why have I been given this card?

This medicine may make you more likely to get infections. This card tells you:

- What you need to know before having Rituzena
- What the signs of an infection are
- What to do if you think you might be getting an infection.

It also includes your name and doctor's name and phone number on the back.

What should I do with this card?

- Keep this card with you all the time - such as in your wallet or purse.
- Show this card to any doctor, nurse or dentist you see - not just the specialist who prescribes your Rituzena.

Keep this card with you for 2 years after your last dose of Rituzena. This is because side effects can develop several months after you have had treatment.

When should I not have Rituzena?

Do not have Rituzena if you have an active infection or a serious problem with your immune system.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you are taking or have previously taken medicines which may affect your immune system this includes chemo-therapy.

What are the signs of getting an infection?

Look out for the following possible signs of infection:

What else do I need to know?

Rarely Rituzena can cause a serious brain infection, called "Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy" or PML. This can be fatal.

- Signs of PML include:
  - Confusion, memory loss or problems thinking
  - Loss of balance or a change in the way you walk or talk
  - Decreased strength or weakness on one side of your body
  - Blurred vision or loss of vision.

If you get any of these, tell a doctor or nurse straight away. You should also tell them about your Rituzena treatment.

Where can I get more information?

See the Rituzena package leaflet for more information.

Treatment start date and contact details

Date of most recent infusion:

_____

Date of first infusion:

_____

Patient's Name:_____

Doctor's Name:_____

Doctor's contact details:_____

Make sure you have a list of all your medicines when you see a health care professional.

Please talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions about the information in this card.

• Fever or cough all the time • Weight loss • Pain without injuring yourself • Feeling generally unwell or listless. **If you get any of these, tell a doctor or nurse straight away.** **You should also tell them about your Rituzena treatment.**	

B. PACKAGE LEAFLET

Package leaflet: Information for the patient

Rituzena 100 mg concentrate for solution for infusion
rituximab

▼This medicine is subject to additional monitoring. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. You can help by reporting any side effects you may get. See the end of section 4 for how to report side effects.

Read this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine because it contains important information for you.
- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.
- If you get any side effects talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

What is in this leaflet:

1. What Rituzena is and what it is used for

What Rituzena is
Rituzena contains the active substance "rituximab". This is a type of protein called a "monoclonal antibody". It is designed to stick to a type of white blood cell called "B-Lymphocyte". When sticking to the surface of this cell, rituximab causes the cell to die.

What Rituzena is used for
Rituzena may be used for the treatment of several different conditions in adults. Your doctor may prescribe Rituzena for the treatment of:

a) Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
This is a disease of the lymph tissue (part of the immune system) that affects B-Lymphocytes. Rituzena can be given alone or with other medicines called "chemotherapy".

b) Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia
Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) is the most common form of adult leukaemia. CLL affects B-lymphocytes, which originate in the bone marrow and develop in the lymph nodes. Patients with CLL have too many abnormal lymphocytes, which accumulate mainly in the bone marrow and blood. The spread of these abnormal B-lymphocytes is the cause of symptoms you may have. Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy destroys these cells.

c) Granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis
Rituzena is used for inducing remission in granulomatosis with polyangiitis (formerly called Wegener's granulomatosis) or microscopic polyangiitis, taken in combination with corticosteroids. Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis are two forms of inflammation of the blood vessels which mainly affects the lungs and kidneys, but may affect other organs as well. B-lymphocytes are involved in the cause of these conditions.

2. What you need to know before you use Rituzena

Do not take Rituzena if:
- you are allergic to rituximab, other proteins which are like rituximab, or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6)
- you have a severe active infection at the moment
- you have a weak immune system
- you have severe heart failure or severe uncontrolled heart disease and have granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis.

Do not have Rituzena if any of the above apply to you. If you are not sure, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena.

Warnings and precautions
Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena if:

- you have ever had or might now have a hepatitis infection. This is because in a few cases, Rituzena could cause hepatitis B to become active again, which can be fatal in very rare cases. Patients who have ever had hepatitis B infection will be carefully checked by their doctor for signs of this infection.
- you have ever had heart problems (such as angina, palpitations or heart failure) or breathing problems.

If any of the above apply to you (or you are not sure), talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena. Your doctor may need to take special care during your treatment with Rituzena.

If you have granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis also tell your doctor
- if you think you may have an infection, even a mild one like a cold. The cells that are affected by Rituzena help to fight infection and you should wait until the infection has passed before you are given Rituzena. Also please tell your doctor if you have had a lot of infections in the past or suffer from severe infections.
- if you think you may need any vaccinations in the near future, including vaccinations for travel to other countries. Some vaccines should not be given at the same time as Rituzena or in the months after you receive Rituzena. Your doctor will check if you should have any vaccines before you receive Rituzena.

Children and adolescents
Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given this medicine if you, or your child, are under 18 years of age. This is because there is not much information about the use of Rituzena in children and young people.

Other medicines and Rituzena
Tell your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines. This includes medicines obtained without a prescription and herbal medicines. This is because Rituzena can affect the way some other medicines work. Also some other medicines can affect the way Rituzena works.

In particular, tell your doctor:
- if you are taking medicines for high blood pressure. You may be asked not to take these other medicines 12 hours before you are given Rituzena. This is because some people have a fall in their blood pressure while they are being given Rituzena.
- if you have ever taken medicines which affect your immune system – such as chemotherapy or immune-suppressive medicines.

If any of the above apply to you (or you are not sure), talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

You must tell your doctor or nurse if you are pregnant, think that you might be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant. This is because Rituzena can transfer across the placenta and may affect your baby.
If you can get pregnant, you and your partner must use an effective method of contraception while using Rituzena. You must also do this for 12 months after your last treatment with Rituzena.
Do not breast-feed while you are being treated with Rituzena. Also do not breast-feed for 12 months after your last treatment with Rituzena. This is because Rituzena may pass into breast milk.

Driving and using machines
It is not known whether Rituzena has an effect on you being able to drive or use any tools or machines.

3. How Rituzena is given

How it is given
Rituzena will be given to you by a doctor or nurse who is experienced in the use of this treatment. They will watch you closely while you are being given this medicine. This is in case you get any side effects.
You will always be given Rituzena as a drip (intravenous infusion).

Medicines given before each Rituzena administration
Before you are given Rituzena, you will be given other medicines (pre-medication) to prevent or reduce possible side effects.

How much and how often you will receive your treatment

a) If you are being treated for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- *If you are having Rituzena alone*
  Rituzena will be given to you once a week for 4 weeks. Repeated treatment courses with Rituzena are possible.
- *If you are having Rituzena with chemotherapy*
  Rituzena will be given to you on the same day as your chemotherapy. This is usually given every 3 weeks up to 8 times.

b) If you are being treated for chronic lymphocytic leukaemia
When you are treated with Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy, you will receive Rituzena every 28 days until you have received 6 doses. The chemotherapy should be given after the Rituzena infusion. Your doctor will decide if you should receive other treatment at the same time.

c) If you are being treated for granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis
Treatment with Rituzena uses four separate infusions given at weekly intervals. A corticosteroid medicine will usually be given by injection before the start of Rituzena treatment. Corticosteroid medicine given by mouth may be started at any time by your doctor to treat your condition.

If you have any further questions on the use of this medicine, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

4. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Most side effects are mild to moderate but some may be serious and require treatment. Rarely, some of these reactions have been fatal.

Infusion reactions
During or within the first 2 hours of the first infusion you may develop fever, chills and shivering. Less frequently, some patients may get pain at the infusion site, blisters, itching, sickness, tiredness, headache, breathing difficulties, tongue or throat swelling, itchy or runny nose, vomiting, flushing or palpitations, heart attack or low number of platelets. If you have heart disease or angina, these infusion reactions might get worse. **Tell the person giving you the infusion immediately** if you develop any of these symptoms, as the infusion may need to be slowed down or stopped. You may require additional treatment such as an antihistamine or paracetamol. When these symptoms go away, or improve, the infusion can be continued. These reactions are less likely to happen after the second infusion. Your doctor may decide to stop your Rituzena treatment if these reactions are serious.

Infections
Tell your doctor immediately if you get signs of an infection including:

- fever, cough, sore throat, burning pain when passing urine or feeling weak or generally unwell
- memory loss, trouble thinking, difficulty walking or sight loss – these may be due to a very rare, serious brain infection, which has been fatal (progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy or PML).

You might get infections more easily during your treatment with Rituzena.
These are often colds, but there have been cases of pneumonia or urinary infections. These are listed below under "Other side effects".

Skin reactions
Very rarely, severe blistering skin conditions that can be life-threatening may occur. Redness, often associated with blisters, may appear on the skin or on mucous membranes, such as inside the mouth, the genital areas or the eyelids, and fever may be present. **Tell your doctor immediately if you have any of these symptoms.**

Other side effects include:
a) If you are being treated for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma or chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Very common side effects (may affect more than 1 in 10 people):
- bacterial or viral infections, bronchitis
- low number of white blood cells sometimes with fever, or low number of blood cells called "platelets"
- feeling sick (nausea)
- bald spots on the scalp, chills, headache
- lower immunity – because of lower levels of anti-bodies called "immunoglobulins" (IgG) in the blood which help protect against infection

Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):
- infections of the blood (sepsis), pneumonia, shingles, cold, bronchial tube infections, fungal infections, infections of unknown origin, sinus inflammation, hepatitis B
- low number of red blood cells (anaemia), low number of all blood cells
- allergic reactions (hypersensitivity)
- high blood sugar level, weight loss, swelling in the face and body, high levels of the enzyme "lactate dehydrogenase (LDH)" in the blood, low calcium levels in the blood
- unusual feelings of the skin – such as numbness, tingling, pricking, burning, a creeping skin feeling, reduced sense of touch
- feeling restless, problems falling asleep,
- becoming very red in the face and other areas of the skin as a consequence of dilation of the blood vessels
- feeling dizzy or anxious
- producing more tears, tear duct problems, inflamed eye (conjunctivitis)
- ringing sound in the ears, ear pain
- heart problems – such as heart attack and uneven or fast heart rate

- high or low blood pressure (low blood pressure especially when standing upright)
- tightening of the muscles in the airways which causes wheezing (bronchospasm), inflammation, irritation in the lungs, throat or sinuses, being short of breath, runny nose
- being sick (vomiting), diarrhoea, pain in the stomach, irritation or ulcers in the throat and mouth, problems swallowing, constipation, indigestion
- eating disorders: not eating enough, leading to weight loss
- hives, increased sweating, night sweats
- muscle problems – such as tight muscles, joint or muscle pain, back and neck pain
- general discomfort or feeling uneasy or tired, shaking, signs of flu
- multiple-organ failure.

Uncommon side effects (may affect up to 1 in 100 people):
- blood clotting problems, decrease of red blood cell production and increase of red blood cell destruction (aplastic haemolytic anaemia), swollen or enlarged lymph nodes
- low mood and loss of interest or enjoyment in doing things, feeling nervous
- taste problems – such as changes in the way things taste
- heart problems – such as reduced heart rate or chest pain (angina)
- asthma, too little oxygen reaching the body organs
- swelling of the stomach.

Very rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people):
- short term increase in the amount of some types of anti-bodies in the blood (called immunoglobulins – IgM), chemical disturbances in the blood caused by break-down of dying cancer cells
- nerve damage in arms and legs, paralysed face
- heart failure
- inflammation of blood vessels including those leading to skin symptoms
- respiratory failure
- damage to the intestinal wall (perforation)
- severe skin problems causing blisters that can be life-threatening. Redness, often associated with blisters, may appear on the skin or on mucous membranes, such as inside the mouth, the genital areas or the eyelids, and fever may be present.
- kidney failure
- severe vision loss

Not known (it is not known how often these side effects happen):
- a reduction in white blood cells which does not happen straight away
- reduced platelets number just after the infusion – this can be reversed, but can be fatal in rare cases
- hearing loss, loss of other senses

b) If you are being treated for granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis

Very common side effects (may affect more than 1 in 10 people):
- infections, such as chest infections, urinary tract infections (pain on passing water), colds and herpes infections
- allergic reactions that are most likely to occur during an infusion, but can occur up to 24-hours after infusion
- diarrhoea
- coughing or shortness of breath
- nose bleeds
- raised blood pressure
- painful joints or back
- muscle twitches or shakiness
- feeling dizzy
- tremors (shakiness, often in the hands)

- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- swelling of the hands or ankles

Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):
- indigestion
- constipation
- skin rashes, including acne or spots
- flushing or redness of the skin
- blocked nose
- tight or painful muscles
- pain in the muscles or in the hands or feet
- low number of red blood cells (anaemia)
- low numbers of platelets in the blood
- an increase in the amount of potassium in the blood
- changes in the rhythm of the heart, or the heart beating faster than normal

Very rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people):
- severe blistering skin conditions that can be life-threatening. Redness, often associated with blisters, may appear on the skin or on mucous membranes, such as inside the mouth, the genital areas or the eyelids, and fever may be present.
- recurrence of a previous Hepatitis B infection

Rituzena may also cause changes in laboratory tests carried out by your doctor.

Reporting of side effects
If you get any side effects talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the national reporting system listed in Appendix V. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

5. How to store Rituzena

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the carton and the vial after EXP. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Store in a refrigerator (2 °C – 8 °C). Keep the container in the outer carton in order to protect from light.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines that you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

6. Contents of the pack and other information

What Rituzena contains
- The active ingredient in Rituzena is called rituximab. The vial contains 100 mg of rituximab. Each mL of concentrate contains 10 mg of rituximab.
- The other ingredients are sodium chloride, tri-sodium citrate dihydrate, polysorbate 80 and water for injections.

What Rituzena looks like and contents of the pack

Rituzena is a clear, colourless solution, supplied as a concentrate for solution for infusion in a glass vial. Pack of 2 vials.

Marketing Authorisation Holder

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And

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This leaflet was last revised in MM/YYYY

Other sources of information

Detailed information on this medicine is available on the European Medicines Agency web site:
http://www.ema.europa.eu

Package leaflet: Information for the patient

Rituzena 500 mg concentrate for solution for infusion
rituximab

▼This medicine is subject to additional monitoring. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. You can help by reporting any side effects you may get. See the end of section 4 for how to report side effects.

Read this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine because it contains important information for you.
- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.
- If you get any side effects talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. See section 4.

What is in this leaflet:

7. What Rituzena is and what it is used for

What Rituzena is
Rituzena contains the active substance "rituximab". This is a type of protein called a "monoclonal antibody". It is designed to stick to a type of white blood cell called "B-Lymphocyte". When sticking to the surface of this cell, rituximab causes the cell to die.

What Rituzena is used for
Rituzena may be used for the treatment of several different conditions in adults. Your doctor may prescribe Rituzena for the treatment of:

d) Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
This is a disease of the lymph tissue (part of the immune system) that affects B-Lymphocytes. Rituzena can be given alone or with other medicines called "chemotherapy".

e) Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia
Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) is the most common form of adult leukaemia. CLL affects B-lymphocytes, which originate in the bone marrow and develop in the lymph nodes. Patients with CLL have too many abnormal lymphocytes, which accumulate mainly in the bone marrow and blood. The spread of these abnormal B-lymphocytes is the cause of symptoms you may have. Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy destroys these cells.

f) Granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis
Rituzena is used for inducing remission in granulomatosis with polyangiitis (formerly called Wegener's granulomatosis) or microscopic polyangiitis, taken in combination with corticosteroids. Granulomatosis with polyangiitis and microscopic polyangiitis are two forms of inflammation of the blood vessels which mainly affects the lungs and kidneys, but may affect other organs as well. B-lymphocytes are involved in the cause of these conditions.

8. What you need to know before you use Rituzena

Do not take Rituzena if:
- you are allergic to rituximab, other proteins which are like rituximab, or any of the other ingredients of this medicine (listed in section 6)
- you have a severe active infection at the moment
- you have a weak immune system
- you have severe heart failure or severe uncontrolled heart disease and have granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis.

Do not have Rituzena if any of the above apply to you. If you are not sure, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena.

Warnings and precautions
Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena if:

- you have ever had or might now have a hepatitis infection. This is because in a few cases, Rituzena could cause hepatitis B to become active again, which can be fatal in very rare cases. Patients who have ever had hepatitis B infection will be carefully checked by their doctor for signs of this infection.
- you have ever had heart problems (such as angina, palpitations or heart failure) or breathing problems.

If any of the above apply to you (or you are not sure), talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena. Your doctor may need to take special care during your treatment with Rituzena.

If you have granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis also tell your doctor
- if you think you may have an infection, even a mild one like a cold. The cells that are affected by Rituzena help to fight infection and you should wait until the infection has passed before you are given Rituzena. Also please tell your doctor if you have had a lot of infections in the past or suffer from severe infections.
- if you think you may need any vaccinations in the near future, including vaccinations for travel to other countries. Some vaccines should not be given at the same time as Rituzena or in the months after you receive Rituzena. Your doctor will check if you should have any vaccines before you receive Rituzena.

Children and adolescents
Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given this medicine if you, or your child, are under 18 years of age. This is because there is not much information about the use of Rituzena in children and young people.

Other medicines and Rituzena
Tell your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are taking, have recently taken or might take any other medicines. This includes medicines obtained without a prescription and herbal medicines. This is because Rituzena can affect the way some other medicines work. Also some other medicines can affect the way Rituzena works.

In particular, tell your doctor:
- if you are taking medicines for high blood pressure. You may be asked not to take these other medicines 12 hours before you are given Rituzena. This is because some people have a fall in their blood pressure while they are being given Rituzena.
- if you have ever taken medicines which affect your immune system – such as chemotherapy or immune-suppressive medicines.

If any of the above apply to you (or you are not sure), talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Rituzena.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding
You must tell your doctor or nurse if you are pregnant, think that you might be pregnant or are planning to become pregnant. This is because Rituzena can transfer across the placenta and may affect your baby.
If you can get pregnant, you and your partner must use an effective method of contraception while using Rituzena. You must also do this for 12 months after your last treatment with Rituzena.
Do not breast-feed while you are being treated with Rituzena. Also do not breast-feed for 12 months after your last treatment with Rituzena. This is because Rituzena may pass into breast milk.

Driving and using machines
It is not known whether Rituzena has an effect on you being able to drive or use any tools or machines.

9. How Rituzena is given

How it is given
Rituzena will be given to you by a doctor or nurse who is experienced in the use of this treatment. They will watch you closely while you are being given this medicine. This is in case you get any side effects.
You will always be given Rituzena as a drip (intravenous infusion).

Medicines given before each Rituzena administration
Before you are given Rituzena, you will be given other medicines (pre-medication) to prevent or reduce possible side effects.

How much and how often you will receive your treatment

d) If you are being treated for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- *If you are having Rituzena alone*
  Rituzena will be given to you once a week for 4 weeks. Repeated treatment courses with Rituzena are possible.
- *If you are having Rituzena with chemotherapy*
  Rituzena will be given to you on the same day as your chemotherapy. This is usually given every 3 weeks up to 8 times.

e) If you are being treated for chronic lymphocytic leukaemia
When you are treated with Rituzena in combination with chemotherapy, you will receive Rituzena every 28 days until you have received 6 doses. The chemotherapy should be given after the Rituzena infusion. Your doctor will decide if you should receive other treatment at the same time.

f) If you are being treated for granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis
Treatment with Rituzena uses four separate infusions given at weekly intervals. A corticosteroid medicine will usually be given by injection before the start of Rituzena treatment. Corticosteroid medicine given by mouth may be started at any time by your doctor to treat your condition.

If you have any further questions on the use of this medicine, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

10. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, this medicine can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Most side effects are mild to moderate but some may be serious and require treatment. Rarely, some of these reactions have been fatal.

Infusion reactions
During or within the first 2 hours of the first infusion you may develop fever, chills and shivering. Less frequently, some patients may get pain at the infusion site, blisters, itching, sickness, tiredness, headache, breathing difficulties, tongue or throat swelling, itchy or runny nose, vomiting, flushing or palpitations, heart attack or low number of platelets. If you have heart disease or angina, these infusion reactions might get worse. **Tell the person giving you the infusion immediately** if you develop any of these symptoms, as the infusion may need to be slowed down or stopped. You may require additional treatment such as an antihistamine or paracetamol. When these symptoms go away, or improve, the infusion can be continued. These reactions are less likely to happen after the second infusion. Your doctor may decide to stop your Rituzena treatment if these reactions are serious.

Infections
Tell your doctor immediately if you get signs of an infection including:

- fever, cough, sore throat, burning pain when passing urine or feeling weak or generally unwell
- memory loss, trouble thinking, difficulty walking or sight loss – these may be due to a very rare, serious brain infection, which has been fatal (progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy or PML).

You might get infections more easily during your treatment with Rituzena.
These are often colds, but there have been cases of pneumonia or urinary infections. These are listed below under "Other side effects".

Skin reactions
Very rarely, severe blistering skin conditions that can be life-threatening may occur. Redness, often associated with blisters, may appear on the skin or on mucous membranes, such as inside the mouth, the genital areas or the eyelids, and fever may be present. **Tell your doctor immediately if you have any of these symptoms.**

Other side effects include:
c) If you are being treated for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma or chronic lymphocytic leukaemia

Very common side effects (may affect more than 1 in 10 people):
- bacterial or viral infections, bronchitis
- low number of white blood cells sometimes with fever, or low number of blood cells called "platelets"
- feeling sick (nausea)
- bald spots on the scalp, chills, headache
- lower immunity – because of lower levels of anti-bodies called "immunoglobulins" (IgG) in the blood which help protect against infection

Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):
- infections of the blood (sepsis), pneumonia, shingles, cold, bronchial tube infections, fungal infections, infections of unknown origin, sinus inflammation, hepatitis B
- low number of red blood cells (anaemia), low number of all blood cells
- allergic reactions (hypersensitivity)
- high blood sugar level, weight loss, swelling in the face and body, high levels of the enzyme "lactate dehydrogenase (LDH)" in the blood, low calcium levels in the blood
- unusual feelings of the skin – such as numbness, tingling, pricking, burning, a creeping skin feeling, reduced sense of touch
- feeling restless, problems falling asleep,
- becoming very red in the face and other areas of the skin as a consequence of dilation of the blood vessels

- feeling dizzy or anxious
- producing more tears, tear duct problems, inflamed eye (conjunctivitis)
- ringing sound in the ears, ear pain
- heart problems – such as heart attack and uneven or fast heart rate
- high or low blood pressure (low blood pressure especially when standing upright)
- tightening of the muscles in the airways which causes wheezing (bronchospasm), inflammation, irritation in the lungs, throat or sinuses, being short of breath, runny nose
- being sick (vomiting), diarrhoea, pain in the stomach, irritation or ulcers in the throat and mouth, problems swallowing, constipation, indigestion
- eating disorders: not eating enough, leading to weight loss
- hives, increased sweating, night sweats
- muscle problems – such as tight muscles, joint or muscle pain, back and neck pain
- general discomfort or feeling uneasy or tired, shaking, signs of flu
- multiple-organ failure.

Uncommon side effects (may affect up to 1 in 100 people):
- blood clotting problems, decrease of red blood cell production and increase of red blood cell destruction (aplastic haemolytic anaemia), swollen or enlarged lymph nodes
- low mood and loss of interest or enjoyment in doing things, feeling nervous
- taste problems – such as changes in the way things taste
- heart problems – such as reduced heart rate or chest pain (angina)
- asthma, too little oxygen reaching the body organs
- swelling of the stomach.

Very rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people):
- short term increase in the amount of some types of anti-bodies in the blood (called immunoglobulins – IgM), chemical disturbances in the blood caused by break-down of dying cancer cells
- nerve damage in arms and legs, paralysed face
- heart failure
- inflammation of blood vessels including those leading to skin symptoms
- respiratory failure
- damage to the intestinal wall (perforation)
- severe skin problems causing blisters that can be life-threatening. Redness, often associated with blisters may appear on the skin or on mucous membranes, such as inside the mouth, the genital areas or the eyelids, and fever may be present.
- kidney failure
- severe vision loss

Not known (it is not known how often these side effects happen):
- a reduction in white blood cells which does not happen straight away
- reduced platelets number just after the infusion – this can be reversed, but can be fatal in rare cases
- hearing loss, loss of other senses

If you are being treated for granulomatosis with polyangiitis or microscopic polyangiitis

Very common side effects (may affect more than 1 in 10 people):
- infections, such as chest infections, urinary tract infections (pain on passing water), colds and herpes infections
- allergic reactions that are most likely to occur during an infusion, but can occur up to 24-hours after infusion
- diarrhoea
- coughing or shortness of breath
- nose bleeds
- raised blood pressure

- painful joints or back
- muscle twitches or shakiness
- feeling dizzy
- tremors (shakiness, often in the hands)
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- swelling of the hands or ankles

Common side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10 people):
- indigestion
- constipation
- skin rashes, including acne or spots
- flushing or redness of the skin
- blocked nose
- tight or painful muscles
- pain in the muscles or in the hands or feet
- low number of red blood cells (anaemia)
- low numbers of platelets in the blood
- an increase in the amount of potassium in the blood
- changes in the rhythm of the heart, or the heart beating faster than normal

Very rare side effects (may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people):
- severe blistering skin conditions that can be life-threatening. Redness, often associated with blisters, may appear on the skin or on mucous membranes, such as inside the mouth, the genital areas or the eyelids, and fever may be present.
- recurrence of a previous Hepatitis B infection

Rituzena may also cause changes in laboratory tests carried out by your doctor.

Reporting of side effects
If you get any side effects talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any side effects not listed in this leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the national reporting system listed in Appendix V. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

11. How to store Rituzena

Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.

Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the carton and the vial after EXP. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Store in a refrigerator (2 °C – 8 °C). Keep the container in the outer carton in order to protect from light.

Do not throw away any medicines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to throw away medicines that you no longer use. These measures will help protect the environment.

12. Contents of the pack and other information

What Rituzena contains
- The active ingredient in Rituzena is called rituximab. The vial contains 500 mg of rituximab. Each mL of concentrate contains 10 mg of rituximab.
- The other ingredients are sodium chloride, tri-sodium citrate dihydrate, polysorbate 80 and

water for injections.

What Rituzena looks like and contents of the pack

Rituzena is a clear, colourless solution, supplied as a concentrate for solution for infusion in a glass vial. Pack of 1 vial.

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Other sources of information

Detailed information on this medicine is available on the European Medicines Agency web site: http://www.ema.europa.eu.