European Medicines Agency
Pre-Authorisation Evaluation of Medicines for Human Use

London, 20 November 2008
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COMMITTEE FOR MEDICINAL PRODUCTS FOR HUMAN USE
SUMMARY OF POSITIVE OPINION*
for
RASILEZ HCT

International Nonproprietary Name (INN): ***aliskiren hemifumarate/hydrochlorothiazide***

On 20 November 2008 the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) adopted a positive opinion,** recommending to grant a marketing authorisation for the medicinal product Rasilez HCT, 150 mg/12.5 mg, 150 mg/25 mg, 300 mg/12.5 mg and 300 mg/25 mg, film-coated tablet, intended for the treatment of essential hypertension in adults. The applicant for this medicinal product is Novartis Europharm Ltd.

The active substances of Rasilez HCT (ATC code C09XA52) are aliskiren hemifumarate, a renin inhibitor, and hydrochlorothiazide, a diuretic. Rasilez HCT is effective in lowering blood pressure in patients with essential hypertension, especially in patients whose blood pressure is not adequately controlled on aliskiren or hydrochlorothiazide used alone. Aliskiren inhibits human renin, the enzyme responsible for the conversion of angiotensinogen to angiotensin I. Therefore the final production of the potent vasoconstrictor angiotensin II is inhibited by blocking the renin system at its very origin. Hydrochlorothiazide is a thiazide diuretic acting on the renal distal convoluted tubule. Thiazides affect the electrolyte re-absorption mechanisms: directly by increasing sodium and chloride excretion to an approximately equal extent, and indirectly by this diuretic action reducing plasma volume.

The benefit with Rasilez HCT is its blood pressure lowering effect achieved by combination of two antihypertensive compounds in a single tablet formulation to control blood pressure in patients with essential hypertension. The most common side effect of Rasilez HCT is diarrhoea. When aliskiren is taken as monotherapy, side effects included diarrhoea, rush, angioedema and cough. Furthermore, the adverse events for the hydrochlorothiazide may include: gastrointestinal irritations, weakness or headache.

A pharmacovigilance plan for Rasilez HCT, as for all medicinal products, will be implemented as part of the marketing authorisation.

The approved indication is:
Treatment of essential hypertension in adults.
Rasilez HCT is indicated in patients whose blood pressure is not adequately controlled on aliskiren or hydrochlorothiazide used alone. Rasilez HCT is indicated as substitution therapy in patients adequately controlled with aliskiren and hydrochlorothiazide, given concurrently, at the same dose level as in the combination.

Detailed recommendations for the use of this product will be described in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) which will be published in the European Public Assessment Report (EPAR) and will be available in all official European Union languages after the marketing authorisation has been granted by the European Commission.

* Summaries of positive opinion are published without prejudice to the Commission Decision, which will normally be issued within 67 days from adoption of the Opinion.

** Applicants may request a re-examination of any CHMP opinion, provided they notify the EMEA in writing of their intention to request a re-examination within 15 days of receipt of the opinion.

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The CHMP, on the basis of quality, safety and efficacy data submitted, considers that there is a favourable benefit to risk balance for Rasilez HCT and therefore recommends the granting of the marketing authorisation.