ANMAT
Administración Nacional de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Tecnología Médica

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL NEWS ON MEDICINES SAFETY

NOVEMBER 2012

NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY AGENCIES

SIMVASTATIN – Hypolipemiant – Increased risk of myopathies and rhabdomyolysis – New safety recommendations.
(Health Canada, Canada, November 7, 2012)
Drug manufacturer Merck Canada Inc. has reported an increased risk of myopathies and rhabdomyolysis associated to the use of simvastatin, particularly when doses exceed 80 mg/day and especially during the first year of treatment.

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/advisories-avis/prof/_2012/zocor_hpc-cps-eng.php

The National Pharmacovigilance System has received a report of myalgias in 2012; three reports of myalgias and two of increased CPK plasmatic level in 2011; and three cases of increased CPK and two myalgias reports in 2010 associated to the use of simvastatin.

ANMAT recommends:

• Using doses ranging from 5 a 40 mg/day of simvastatin. Treatment is to be changed by using another drug with a lower muscle toxicity risk in patients who do not obtain the expected reduction of LDL cholesterol with the 40mg/day maximum doses.

• The use of 80mg/day doses of simvastatin is to be restricted to patients who have received such drug on a chronic basis and who have not presented with signs of muscle toxicity during treatment; and to subjects with a high cardiovascular risk who do not tolerate other statins.

• Holders of marketing authorizations of simvastatin-containing products are reminded of the need and importance of keeping updated patient information leaflets.

FIBRIN SEALANTS – Contraindications and precautions for use in spray application - Risk of gas embolism.
(EMA, European Union, November 19, 2012)
(AEMPS, Spain, November 20, 2012)

Fibrin sealants are topically-administered medicines indicated for surgical procedures to obtain hemostasis or the sealing of tissues. The Committee for Medicinal Products of Human Use and the Spanish Agency of Medicines and Sanitary Products published the conclusions of a review on the risk of gas embolism associated to the administration by spray of fibrin sealants. Even when the risk-benefit balance remains favorable, the information for health professionals and the conditions for use currently established in technical specifications do not seem to be sufficient. In the light of the above mentioned, the following suggestions have been given:

• Spraying the product only using CO2 and not pressurized air, as a higher solubility of CO2 in blood leads to a lower risk of gas embolism.

• Not spraying in endoscopic surgery. In the case of laparoscopic surgery, the minimum recommended distance to the tissue surface is to be ensured.

• Updating technical specifications regarding the pressure recommended for spraying and the distance to the tissue surface.

http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/public_health_alerts/2012/11/human_pha_detail_000069.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac058001d126

http://www.aemps.gob.es/informa/notasInformativas/medicamentosUsoHumano/seguridad/2012/NI-MUH_FV_16-2012.htm

ANMAT reminds holders of marketing authorizations of fibrin-sealant-containing medicinal products administered by spray of the need to keep updated patient information leaflets.

DENOSUMAB (Prolia®) – Osteoporosis treatment – Risk of atypical femoral fractures.
(Health Canada, Canada, November 16, 2012)
The pharmaceutical company that markets the above mentioned product has informed about the risk of atypical femoral fractures in patients included in the Phase III study (FREEDOM).
Atypical fractures are those produced in the proximal or subtrochanteric diaphysis caused by a minor trauma or that are not associated to any trauma. Even when the events recorded were few (<1/10000), health professionals are recommended informing patients about this risk and advising them to see a doctor if they present with recent or atypical pain in thighs, hips or groin.

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/advisories-avis/prof/_2012/prolia_hpc-cps-eng.php

Holders of marketing authorizations of denosumab-containing medicinal products are reminded to update patient information leaflets.

OPHTALMIC DROPS AND NASAL SPRAYS – Serious adverse events due to accidental intake by children.
(FDA, United States, October 25, 2012)
United States FDA has warned about the risk of serious adverse events in children due to an accidental intake of over-the-counter eye drops and nasal sprays.
The products reported in the accidental intake cases contained the active pharmaceutical ingredients: tetrahydrozoline, oximetazoline or naphazoline. The cases reviewed by the FDA occurred in children younger than 5 years old. According to the information provided, the intake of very small quantities (1-2ml) can lead to serious adverse events in young children.
Even when no deaths were reported, some cases were serious and included nausea, vomit, lethargy, tachycardia, breathing difficulty, bradycardia, hypo and hypertension, sedation, mydriasis, stupor, hypothermia and some patients even required hospitalization.

http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm325257.htm

Since 2006 to date, the National Pharmacovigilance System has not received any report of adverse events associated to the accidental intake of products containing the active pharmaceutical ingredients tetrahydrozoline, oximetazoline or naphazoline.
ANMAT will continue conducting pharmacovigilance monitoring on these products.

POST-MARKETING STUDIES
DABIGATRAN (Pradaxa®) – Anticoagulant – Review of bleeding post-marketing reports.
(FDA, United States, November 2, 2012)
Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States has recently issued a safety announcement warning about the risk of serious bleeding in patients who received dabigatran. The rates of gastrointestinal and intracranial bleeding in dabigatran-treated subjects were evaluated and compared to those of a group of warfin-treated subjects. The results informed show that the bleeding rates associated to the use of dabigatran do not exceed the rates observed with the use of warfin.
The FDA has not changed recommendations for the use of this product. However, it suggests professionals prescribing this drug that they should carefully follow the dosing recommendations in the patient information leaflets, especially in patients with kidney failure in order to reduce bleeding risk.

http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm326580.htm

Since 2009 to date, the National Pharmacovigilance System has received 30 reports of bleeding in the gastrointestinal system and 8 reports related to strokes in dabigatran-treated patients.

VACCINES
CERVARIX® – Vaccine against the human papilloma virus – The risk-benefit balance remains favorable.
(MHRA, United Kingdom, November, 2012)

The United Kingdom agency carried out a safety review on the Cervarix vaccine, encompassing the period of use in that region, since September 2008 to July 2012. After the administration of at least six million doses of the vaccine, no new safety alerts were identified and the adverse events reported were the expected ones. In summary, the safety experience with Cervarix supports the conclusions previously obtained regarding a positive risk-benefit profile.

http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/DrugSafetyUpdate/CON207191

This vaccine was included into the Argentine Official Vaccination Schedule in 2011. ANMAT reminds the public that girls turning 11 years old are to be vaccinated and that three doses are required for an effective immunization: the first dose; the second dose: one month later and the third dose: 6 months after the first dose.

Vaccination is free of charge in all public vaccination offices and hospitals nationwide.

http://www.msal.gov.ar/index.php/component/content/article/46/185-vph

The National Pharmacovigilance System will continue to monitor this vaccine. Health professionals and users are recommended reporting to ANMAT any suspected adverse events associated to this vaccine.
Cervarix patient information leaflet can be checked on ANMAT Pharmacologic Formulary by clicking on:

http://www.anmat.gov.ar/aplicaciones_net/applications/consultas/vademecum/vademecum.asp

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AGRIPPAL® S1/AGRIPPAL® S1 JUNIOR AND FLUAD® – Vaccines against seasonal influenza – Preventive recall of all existing batches due to the presence of particles.
(AEMPS, Spain, October 25, 2012)
(AIFA, Italy, October 25, 2012)
On October 25, 2012, ANMAT National Pharmacovigilance System received a communication from manufacturer Novartis S.A. informing about the preventive recall from market by the Italian Drug Agency (AIFA) of all the batches of Agrippal and Fluad vaccines, due to the presence of white particles in the injections of some batches.
Several of those batches had already been marketed in Spain and other European countries; however no post-vaccination adverse events were detected. On November 9, the Italian drug regulatory agency announced the lifting of the temporary and preventive suspension on the use of the above products, after reviewing the information provided by the holder of the marketing authorization of the products and an independent evaluation by AIFA that confirmed the quality, safety and efficacy of said vaccines.

http://www.aemps.gob.es/informa/alertas/medicamentosUsoHumano/2012/docs/calidad_47-12.pdf

http://www.agenziafarmaco.gov.it/it/content/divieto-di-utilizzo-vaccini-influenzali-della-ditta-novartis-vaccines-and-diagnostics

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NATIONAL NEWS

NEOTIGASON® (Acitretine 25 mg) – Manufacturer Roche

In response to the inquiries from professionals and patients as to the information in Portuguese language about the above product, it is hereby informed that, given the lack of supply of this product in Argentine pharmacies, ANMAT has authorized the marketing of the product approved in Brazil.