



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON TYSABRI AND LIVER INJURY

What is Tysabri?

Tysabri contains the active substance natalizumab. It is used as an infusion (drip into a vein) every four weeks to treat patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) when the MS is of the 'relapsing-remitting' type (with periods with symptoms alternating with periods without symptoms). Tysabri is used when treatment with a beta-interferon (another type of medicine used in MS) is not adequate, or when the disease is severe and rapidly getting worse.

Tysabri has been authorised by the European Commission in June 2006 and is marketed within the European Union in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

What is the issue with Tysabri?

There have been reports of liver injury in patients receiving Tysabri. The term 'liver injury' is used to describe any side effect seen in a patient that could be a sign of the liver malfunctioning, such as raised levels of liver enzymes, yellowing of the skin or inflammation of the liver.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is aware of 29 reports of liver injury in patients receiving Tysabri, with about two thirds of these cases being classified as serious. The company that makes Tysabri estimates that about 24,000 patients worldwide have received at least one dose of the medicine since it was first marketed in 2004.

What action is the EMA taking?

The Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) and its Pharmacovigilance Working Party discussed the available information and its impact on the use of Tysabri during their March 2008 meetings.

They noted that the cases occurred in patients who sometimes had only received one dose of Tysabri, and that some patients, whose liver problems had improved when they stopped Tysabri, had a recurrence of the same side-effects once the medicine was restarted. They also noted that the product information for Tysabri currently does not contain any warnings on liver injury. The committee agreed that the product information should be updated to include information about the risk of liver injury. This includes warnings that patients treated with Tysabri should have their liver function monitored, and that they should see their doctors if they develop symptoms of liver problems. Doctors should stop treatment if they judge the liver injury to be significant.

What are the consequences of the EMA's action for patients and doctors?

- The specialist doctors who prescribe Tysabri need to be aware of the risk of liver injury. They must ensure that all patients to whom they prescribe have their liver function monitored as appropriate.
- Patients who are receiving Tysabri and who think that they may have liver problems (such as yellowing of the skin or unusual darkening of the urine) should talk to their doctor.

Are there any further steps?

The CHMP has asked the company to implement these changes via a change (variation) to the marketing authorisation for Tysabri. Further advice will be given to healthcare professionals and patients as appropriate once it is completed.