25 April 2014

Domperidone: risk of cardiac side effects - restricted indication, new contraindications, and reduced dose and duration of use

Dear healthcare professional,

I am writing to inform you about important new information for domperidone (Motilium).

Summary

Domperidone is associated with a small increased risk of serious cardiac side effects. Its use is now restricted to the relief of symptoms of nausea and vomiting and the dosage and duration of use have been reduced. Domperidone is now contraindicated in those with underlying cardiac conditions and other risk factors (see below).

Background

A recent Europe-wide review has recommended updates to the treatment advice for domperidone following evaluation of the benefits and risks of domperidone (see http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/news_and_events/news/2014/04/news_detail_002083.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac058004d5c1). The review was triggered following continued reports of cardiac side effects and a small increased risk of serious cardiac side effects was confirmed. A higher risk was observed in patients older than 60 years, adults taking daily oral doses of more than 30mg, and those taking QT-prolonging medicines or CYP3A4 inhibitors concomitantly.

Advice for healthcare professionals

Indication

- Domperidone is now restricted to use in the relief of symptoms nausea and vomiting
- It should be used at the lowest effective dose for the shortest possible time

Contraindications

- Domperidone is contraindicated in people:
  - with conditions where the cardiac conduction is, or could be, impaired
  - with underlying cardiac diseases such as congestive heart failure
  - receiving other medications known to prolong QT or potent CYP3A4 inhibitors
  - with severe hepatic impairment

- Patients with these conditions should have their treatment reviewed at their next routine appointment and be switched to an alternative treatment if required

Posology

Oral formulations

- For adults and adolescents over 12 years of age and weighing 35kg or more, the recommended maximum dose in 24 hours is 30mg (dose interval: 10mg up to three times a day)
In children under 12 years of age and weighing less than 35kg, the recommended maximum dose in 24 hours is 0.75mg/kg body weight (dose interval: 0.25mg/kg body weight up to three times a day)

Suppository formulation
- Suppositories should only be used in adults and adolescents weighing 35kg or more, the recommended maximum daily dose in 24 hours is 60mg (dose interval: 30mg twice a day)

Duration of treatment
- The maximum treatment duration should not exceed one week
- Patients currently receiving long-term treatment with domperidone should be reassessed at a routine appointment to advise on treatment continuation, dose change, or cessation

Administration of liquid formulations
- Oral liquid formulations of domperidone should only be given via an appropriately designed, graduated oral syringe to ensure dose accuracy

Advice to give to patients
- Domperidone should only be used for short periods of time to treat nausea and vomiting
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist at your next routine visit if you are taking domperidone and have any problems with your heart or other concerns about your treatment
- Seek medical attention immediately if you experience heart-related symptoms such as irregular heartbeat or fainting while taking domperidone

Additional advice for pharmacists:

Non-prescription availability of domperidone:
Domperidone is available to buy in a pharmacy without prescription as tablets for use in adults and adolescents of 16 years and above. It is now restricted to use in nausea and vomiting. It should be used at a dose of up to 10mg three times daily for a maximum period of 48 hours.

Pharmacists are asked to take the following steps when supplying domperidone without prescription:
- Ask questions to exclude supply for use by people for whom domperidone is contraindicated (see above)
- Advise people to take domperidone without prescription only for nausea and vomiting
- Advise people to take the lowest dose for the shortest possible time up to a maximum daily dose of 3 tablets and for a maximum period of 48 hours

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sarah Branch
Deputy Director
VRMM Division
Telephone: +44(0)203 080 6000
Email: info@mhra.gsi.gov.uk