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EMA recommends authorisation of Daruph / Anafezyn (dasatinib anhydrous) in the EU

On 19 May 2022, the European Medicines Agency completed a review of Daruph/Anafezyn[1] following a disagreement among EU Member States regarding its authorisation. The Agency concluded that the benefits of Daruph/Anafezyn outweigh its risks, and that the marketing authorisation should be granted in Sweden and in the Member States of the EU where the company applied for a marketing authorisation (France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia).

What is Daruph/Anafezyn?

Daruph/Anafezyn is a cancer medicine to be used in adults and children to treat chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) and acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL). Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells (called granulocytes in the case of CML and lymphocytes in ALL) where the cells grow out of control. In some cases, Daruph/Anafezyn is for use in patients whose cancer cells are 'Philadelphia chromosome positive' (when the patient's genes have rearranged themselves to form a special chromosome called the Philadelphia chromosome).

Daruph/Anafezyn is to be available as tablets to be taken by mouth and contains the active substance dasatinib, which belongs to the class of protein kinase inhibitors.

Daruph/Anafezyn was developed as a hybrid medicine. This means that it is similar to a reference medicine called Sprycel which is already authorised in the EU and contains the same active substance. However, the form of the active substance in Daruph/Anafezyn (dasatinib anhydrous) is different to that in Sprycel (dasatinib monohydrate) and is intended to allow the use of a lower dose of dasatinib to achieve the same effect. It is also intended to allow the use of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) or histamine 2 (H2) antagonists (medicines used to reduce stomach acid) while taking Daruph/Anafezyn.

[1] These medicines are identical and were submitted as part of a so called 'duplicate application'. They are referred to as Daruph/Anafezyn in this document. Daruph/Anafezyn was also to be available in the EU under the trade name Dasatinib Zentiva.

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Why was Daruph/Anafezyn reviewed?

The company intending to market Daruph/Anafezyn, Zentiva k.s., submitted a marketing authorisation application to the Swedish medicines regulatory agency for a decentralised procedure. This is a procedure where one Member State (the 'reference Member State', in this instance Sweden) assesses a medicine with a view to granting a marketing authorisation that will be valid in this country as well as in other Member States where the company has applied for a marketing authorisation (the 'concerned Member States', in this instance France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia).

However, the Member States were not able to reach an agreement and the Swedish medicines regulatory agency referred the matter to EMA for arbitration on 23 December 2021.

The grounds for the referral were three concerns raised by Germany, Italy and Slovakia. The first concern was that, according to current guidance for dasatinib medicines, the data submitted were not sufficient to show that Daruph/Anafezyn has the same effect and safety profile as the reference medicine Sprycel. There were also concerns about a risk of medication error if switching from another dasatinib medicine to Daruph/Anafezyn. Although not recommended, this could lead to lower effectiveness or to side effects due to the difference in the strengths of Daruph/Anafezyn compared with the available strengths of authorised dasatinib medicines. The final concern related to the company's proposal to change the warning in the product information to allow the use of PPIs and H2 antagonists when taking Daruph/Anafezyn, while such use is not recommended for Sprycel as it may reduce Sprycel's effectiveness due to a lower level of the medicine available in the body.

What is the outcome of the review?

Based on evaluation of the currently available data, EMA concluded that Daruph/Anafezyn has a similar effect as the reference medicine Sprycel. The Agency also considered that the risk minimisation measures proposed by the company were sufficient to address the potential risk of medication error. Finally, EMA considered that there was sufficient evidence to allow the use of PPIs and H2 antagonists while taking Daruph/Anafezyn, since the form of the active substance in this medicine means its activity is less sensitive to changes in stomach acidity than that of Sprycel.

The Agency therefore concluded that the benefits of Daruph/Anafezyn outweigh its risks and recommended that the marketing authorisation for Daruph/Anafezyn should be granted in the concerned Member States.

More about the procedure

The review of Daruph/Anafezyn was initiated on 27 January 2022 at the request of the Sweden medicines regulatory authority under Article 29(4) of Directive 2001/83/EC.

The review was carried out by EMA's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP), responsible for questions concerning medicines for human use.

The European Commission issued an EU-wide legally binding decision on the marketing authorisation of Daruph/Anafezyn on 18 July 2022.