Review of oral Methadone medicines containing povidone started

05.05.2014| Circular Number P11/2014

Information on Methadone

Methadone-containing medicines are used to treat drug addiction in patients who are dependent on opioids (such as heroin). Methadone prevents or reduces withdrawal symptoms and decreases the chance of relapse. Methadone is also used in the treatment of severe pain.

Oral methadone medicines are available as solutions or tablets. Some of them also contain povidone, which is used in oral solutions as a suspending and dispersing agent, or as binding agent for tablets. Various forms of povidone are available, which vary in the size of the molecule. The forms that have been linked to the reported safety issue have a large molecular size.

Oral methadone medicines containing povidone have been authorised via national procedures in Malta as well as several other Member states (Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.) The list of authorised products is tabulated below;

Product Name	Pharmaceutical Form	Authorisation Number	Contains Povidone
Methadone 1mg/ml Oral Solution B.P. - Sugar Free	ORAL SOLUTION	AA055/02301	no
Methadone Hydrochloride Oral Solution 1mg/1ml Sugar Free	ORAL SOLUTION	MA091/00101	no
Methadone Mixture DTF Sugar-Free	ORAL SOLUTION	MA050/01101	no
Methadone Martindale Pharma Oral Solution 2mg/ml oral solution	ORAL SOLUTION	MA105/00501	yes
Pinadone Methadone DTF 1mg/ml Oral Solution	ORAL SOLUTION	MA143/00301	no
Pinadone Methadone DTF 1mg/ml Oral Solution Sugar Free	ORAL SOLUTION	MA143/00302	no

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Information from the European Medicines Agency about the safety concern

The review was triggered by the Norwegian Medicines Agency, NOMA, following a number of reports of kidney failure in former or current drug abusers which may be linked to the misuse of methadone oral solutions containing certain types of povidone. Although these medicines are intended for oral use only (i.e. for ingestion by mouth) and a warning exists in the product information that it should only be used orally; however, some patients may abuse oral methadone preparations. If a medicine containing these forms of povidone is not administered orally, there are concerns that povidone can accumulate inside the cells of vital organs which is not considered to occur when oral methadone medicines are used as recommended.

As a result of these concerns, Norway suspended the methadone-containing oral solution that contains povidone present on the national market, and has now asked the European Agency to review whether there are implications for the use of all oral methadone medicines containing povidone in other European Union (EU) Member States.

The European Medicines Agency's Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee will therefore review this safety concern and its impact on the benefit-risk balance of oral methadone medicines that contain povidone, and will issue an opinion on whether their marketing authorisations should be maintained, varied, suspended or withdrawn across the EU. As methadone-containing medicines containing povidone are all authorised nationally, the PRAC recommendation will be forwarded to the Co-ordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedures – Human (CMDh), which will adopt a final position.

Reporting Adverse Drug Reactions

Healthcare professionals and patients are encouraged to maintain vigilance on methadone containing medicinal products. Suspected Adverse Drug Reactions (side effects) may be reported using the Medicines Authority ADR form which can be downloaded from **www.medicinesauthority.gov.mt/adrportal** and sent by email to **postlicensing.medicinesauthority@gov.mt** or by mail to the address below**.** ADR reports can also be sent to the marketing authorisation holder or their local representatives.

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Healthcare professionals and patients are encouraged to regularly check the Medicines Authority website for product safety updates as these are issued on an ongoing basis.

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