June 28, 2018

COM-2018-012

Dear provider of pharmaceutical services,

Receive king greetings from PharmPix. This communication highlights some recent updates in the Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents Living with HIV, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

DOLUTEGRAVIR SAFETY

On May 18, 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a Drug Safety Communication to alert that serious cases of neural tube birth defects involving the brain, spine, and spinal cord have been reported in babies born to women treated with dolutegravir (DTG) used to treat HIV. On May 30, 2018, the U.S. Department of HHS Antiretroviral Guidelines Panels released the following recommendations regarding use of DTG in adults and adolescents with HIV who are pregnant or of child bearing potential:

Dolutegravir is available as a single ingredient product under the brand name **Tivicay™** and as a fixed dose combination tablet with other HIV medicines under the brand names **Juluca™** (dolutegravir and rilpivirine) and **Triumeq™** (abacavir, dolutegravir, and lamivudine).

Clinical scenario	Recommendation
Patients not known to be pregnant	Documentation of a negative pregnancy test is recommended prior to initiating DTG.
Patients who are currently receiving DTG as a component of their ART or who wish to be started on DTG	Provide counseling about the potential risk of NTDs when DTG is taken near the time of conception. **NTDs occur within the first 28 days after conception or 6 weeks from the last menstrual period.**
Patients who are pregnant, taking DTG, and within 8 weeks from last menstrual period	Discuss the risks and benefits of the current regimens. If there are other good options to replace DTG, then switching to a non-DTG ART regimen is recommended.
Patients who are pregnant and 8 weeks or greater from last menstrual period	These patients may initiate or continue DTG-based regimens. Discontinuing DTG-based regimens is unlikely to confer any benefits after the neural tube has formed, and medication changes during pregnancy could increase the risk of viremia and transmission of HIV to the infant.

Abbreviations: ART – Antiretroviral therapy; DTG – Dolutegravir; NTDs – Neural tube birth defects.

Visit https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/news/2109/recommendations-regarding-the-use-of-dolutegravir-in-adults-and-adolescents-with-hiv-who-are-pregnant-or-of-child-bearing-potential for details regarding:

- Recommendations for the use of DTG in pregnant patients and in those who may become pregnant based on antiretroviral (ARV) history and various clinical scenarios, and
- Recommendations on alternative ARV drugs when DTG cannot be used.

Pharmacists' responsibilities:

- Inform women of childbearing age about the potential risk of neural tube defects when a dolutegravir-containing regimen is used at the time of conception and early in pregnancy.
- Weigh the benefits and the risks of dolutegravir in women of childbearing age. Alternative antiretroviral medicines should be considered. Discuss the relative risks and benefits of appropriate alternative antiretroviral therapies.

6 Street 1, Suite 101, Guaynabo, PR 00968-1770 Tel. 787.522.5252 | Fax 1.866.912.2830 www.pharmpix.com

- If the decision is made to use dolutegravir in women of childbearing age, reinforce the consistent use of effective birth control.
- Confirm that pregnancy testing has been performed before initiating a dolutegravir-containing regimen in women of childbearing age to exclude pregnancy.
- Report side effects involving dolutegravir to FDA's MedWatch program at www.fda.gov/medwatch.

NEW FDA-APPROVED DRUG

Bictegravir is a new HIV-1 integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) that was approved by the FDA as part of a single tablet, once-daily regimen that includes tenofovir alafenamide and emtricitabine, under the brand name Biktarvy™. Biktarvy™ is indicated as a complete regimen for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults who have no antiretroviral treatment history or to replace the current antiretroviral regimen in those who are virologically suppressed (HIV-1 RNA less than 50 copies/mL) on a stable antiretroviral regimen for at least 3 months with no history of treatment failure and no known substitutions associated with resistance to the individual components of Biktarvy™.

The Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents Living with HIV have been updated to include Biktarvy™ as one of the recommended initial regimens for most people with HIV.

TENOFOVIR ALAFENAMIDE (TAF) VERSUS TENOFOVIR DISOPROXIL FUMARATE (TDF)

Longer-term safety data have clarified the relative advantages of TAF and TDF. TAF has less bone and kidney toxicity, and is therefore particularly advantageous in people at risk for those conditions; TDF is associated with lower lipid levels. Safety, cost, and access are among the factors to consider when choosing between TAF and TDF.

Other updates have been made throughout several sections of the guidelines. For details regarding all the updates and the recommendations for HIV management, we recommend the review of the full guidelines, which are available at: https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines. You can also find information regarding HIV/AIDS guidelines and recommendations at: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/guidelines/index.html.

Medical literature is dynamic and is continuously changing as new scientific knowledge is developed. We exhort the frequent revision of treatment guidelines to assure that your recommendations are consistent with the most actualized information.

On PharmPix we are compromised with the health and wellness of our insured. It is our priority to offer high quality services and to promote practices for health promotion and diseases prevention. If you have any doubt or wish to have more information regarding this document, you can call us to 787-522-5252, extension 138.
Regards,

Pharmacy Department

References:
1. Juluca, Tivicay, Triumeq (dolutegravir): FDA to Evaluate - Potential Risk of Neural Tube Birth Defects. (2018). Retrieved from https://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm608168.htm
2. What's New in the Guidelines? Adult and Adolescent ARV. (2018). Retrieved from https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/1/adult-and-adolescent-arv/37/whats-new-in-the-guidelines-
3. Recommendations Regarding the Use of Dolutegravir in Adults and Adolescents with HIV who are Pregnant or of Child-Bearing Potential News. (2018). Retrieved from https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/news/2109/recommendations-regarding-the-use-of-dolutegravir-in-adults-and-adolescents-with-hiv-who-are-pregnant-or-of-child-bearing-potential

6 Street 1, Suite 101, Guaynabo, PR 00968-1770 Tel. 787.522.5252 | Fax 1.866.912.2830 www.pharmpix.com