



## **MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR SIR GORDON DUFF, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN MEDICINES**

### **APROTININ - SUSPENSION OF UK LICENCES**

29 November 2007

Dear Colleague,

I wrote to you on 5 November to advise you that the UK licence holders for aprotinin, Bayer and Nordic Pharma, had voluntarily suspended global marketing of the drug. I am now writing to inform you that **from 7 December 2007**;

- the UK licences (marketing authorisations) for aprotinin will be suspended until further notice on the basis of advice from the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM)
- use of aprotinin from this date will be under the provision for 'Specials' supply. Supplies will be permitted for this purpose
- any such use would be unlicensed and the responsibility for use rests with prescribers

#### **CHM advice**

The CHM met in November to consider the latest evidence in relation to the safety of aprotinin. The CHM's advice to suspend the marketing authorisations was based on the preliminary findings from a triple-blind, randomised clinical trial (the BART study) which was recently terminated due to an excess of mortality in the aprotinin arm (relative risk of 1.5 compared with both tranexamic acid and aminocaproic acid). The decision was supported by evidence from recent observational studies which suggests a similar risk, as well as increased risks of cardiac, cerebrovascular and renal adverse effects.

The CHM noted that aprotinin may be more beneficial than the comparator drugs in reducing bleeding, but considered that this benefit was outweighed by these risks. The CHM was also concerned that specific patient groups who may be at increased risk of mortality, or who may gain most benefit from aprotinin, cannot be identified based on the current data. It was therefore not possible to ensure patient safety by further restrictions on use within the licence.

#### **European review**

While the marketing authorisations are suspended there will be a full risk/benefit review within Europe. This is expected to take at least 3 months and will result in a decision by the European Commission.

#### **Ongoing availability of aprotinin**

Pending the final European Commission Decision, there is no formal recall in the UK. Until the licences are suspended, there is opportunity for order of

licensed aprotinin. You are reminded of the advice in my letter of 5 November that aprotinin should only be used when the likely benefits outweigh any risks to individual patients. We ask you to give very careful consideration to the available evidence on the possible risks of aprotinin in deciding whether aprotinin is suitable for your patients. Following the suspension, limited supply of aprotinin to individual patients under 'Specials' regulations will be permitted.

For further information please contact the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) at 020 7084 2000 ([www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk)).

Yours faithfully,

**Professor Sir Gordon Duff**  
**Chairman, Commission on Human Medicines**