Two Part D Plans Relax Rules on AD Drugs

BY MARY ELLEN SCHNEIDER

New York Bureau

wo major Medicare Part D drug plans have stopped requiring prior authorization for coverage of Alzheimer's medications, according to officials at the Alzheimer's Association.

RxAmerica and Medco no longer will require physicians to go through the prior authorization process before they prescribe Aricept (donepezil), Exelon (rivastigmine), Razadyne (galantamine), and Namenda (memantine) for Medicare Part D beneficiaries over age 65.

With these announcements, Silver-Script, a subsidiary of Caremark, becomes the only one of the nine national or nearnational Part D drug plan sponsors that still requires prior authorization, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Caremark spokesman Dale Thomas said the company is in contact with officials at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

and the Alzheimer's Association but had no further comment at press time.

Earlier this year, officials with the Alzheimer's Association wrote to CMS citing problems that beneficiaries had getting access to Alzheimer's drugs after the end of the initial Medicare Part D transition period. The group also noted in its letter that it was "unrealistic and unreasonable" for prior authorization denials to be addressed through the appeals process.

"Neither frail patients nor their physi-

cians can be expected to navigate the plan system and file additional documentation in order to obtain these medications that are on the plan's formulary," Stephen Mc-Connell, vice president of advocacy and public policy at the Alzheimer's Association, said in the letter.

Officials at the Alzheimer's Association sent copies of the letter to the three Part D drug plans and received quick responses from RxAmerica and Medco about plans to change their policies, according to Leslie B. Fried, director of the Medicare Advocacy Project of the Alzheimer's Association.

Removing prior authorization is vital, according to Dr. Marc Nuwer, professor of neurology at the University of California in Los Angeles. For every prior authorization request, the physician has to go back over the patient records looking for dates and other treatment information. "It's a hassle," he said.

BRIEF SUMMARY: Consult the Full Prescribing Information for complete product information.

ADDERALL XR* CAPSULES

CIL RX Only

AMPHETAMINES HAVE A HIGH POTENTIAL FOR ABUSE. ADMINISTRATION OF AMPHETAMINES FOR PROLONGED

PERIODS OF TIME MAY LEAD TO DRUG DEPENDENCE. PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO THE POSSIBILITY

OF SUBJECTS OBTAINING AMPHETAMINES FOR NON-THERAPEUTIC USE OR DISTRIBUTION TO OTHERS AND THE DRUGS

SHOULD BE PRESCRIBED OR DISPENSED SPARINGLY.

MISLISF OR AMPLETAMINE THAT AND ADDRESS OF THE PROPERTY OF T

NISUSE OF AMPHETAMINE MAY CAUSE SUDDEN DEATH AND SERIOUS CARDIOVASCULAR ADVERSE EVENTS.

WARNINGS
Serious Cardiovascular Events
Sudden Death and Pre-existing Structural Cardiac Abnormalities or Other Serious Heart Problems
Children and Adolescents
Sudden Death has been reported in association with CNIS stimulant treatment at usual doses in children and adolescents with structural cardiac abnormalities or other serious heart problems. Although some serious heart problems alone carry an increased risk of sudden death, stimulant products generally should not be used in children or adolescents with known serious structural cardiac abnormalities, cardiomyopathy, serious heart rhythm abnormalities, or other serious cardiac problems that may place them at increased vulnerability to the sympathomimetic effects of a stimulant drug (see CONTRAINDICATIONS).

may a time a company pure by serious rearr mynm abnormalities, or other serious cardiac problems that may place on at increased vulnerability to the sympathomimetic effects of a stimulant drug (see CONTRAINDICATIONS). bulls under deaths, stroke, and myocardial infarction have been reported in adults taking stimulant drugs at usual doses for ADHD. though the role of stimulants in these adult cases is also unknown, adults bave a greater likelihood than children of having serious that rightment and because the properties of the pro

local in joycolicu consideration should be taken in using stimulants to treat ADHD patients with comorbid bipolar disorder because of concern for sible induction of mixed/manic episode in such patients. Prior to initiating treatment with a stimulant, patients with orbid depressive symptoms should be adequately screened to determine if they are at risk for bipolar disorder, such ening should include a detailed psychiatric history, including a family history of suicide, bipolar disorder, and depression. Tigence of New Psychotic or Manic Symptoms trent emergent psychotic or manic symptoms, e.g., hallucinations, delusional thinking, or mania in children and escents without prior history of psychotic illness or mania can be caused by stimulants at usual doses. If such ploms occur, consideration should be given to a possible causal role of the stimulant, and discontinuation of treatment be appropriate. In a pooled analysis of multiple short-term, placebo-controlled studies, such symptoms occurred in ut of 1% (4 patients with events out of 3482 exposed to methylphenidate or amphetamine for several weeks at usual doses) timulant-treated patients compared to 0 in placebo-treated patients.

Seizures

There is some clinical evidence that stimulants may lower the convulsive threshold in patients with prior EIG abnormalities in absence of seizures, and very rarely, in patients with prior EIG abnormalities in absence of seizures, the drug should be discontinued.

Fixed dividence of seizures. In the presence of seizures, the drug should be discontinued.

Fixed Disturbance

Difficulties with accommodation and blurring of vision have been reported with stimulant treatment.

FRECAUTIONS

General: The least amount of amphetamine feasible should be prescribed or dispensed at one time in order to minimize the possibility of overdosage. ADDEFALL XR* should be used with caution in patients who use other sympathomimetic drugs. Tites: Amphetamines have been reported to exacerbate motor and phonic tos and Tourette's syndrome. Therefore, clinical evaluation for tics and Tourette's syndrome in children and their families should precede use of stimulant medications. Information for Patients: Amphetamines may impair the ability of the patient to engage in potentially hazardous activities such as operating machinery or vehicles; the patient should therefore be cautioned accordingly.

Drug Interactions: Activitying agents—Gestrointestinal actidifying agents—These agents (ammonium chloride, sodium acid phosphate, etc.) increase the concentration of the increase species of the amphetamines molecule, thereby increasing uniany excretion. Both groups of agents tower blood levels and efficacy of amphetamines. Advances of the avoided. Urinary alkalinizing agents—Gestrointestinal admandances and the properties of the avoided. Urinary alkalinizing agents—Gestrointestinal admandances and the properties of the amphetamine molecule, thereby decreasing uniany excretion. Both groups of agents to ever a properties of the amphetamine molecule, thereby decreasing uniany excretion. Both groups of agents (administration of the non-ionized species of the amphetamine molecule.)

This slowing optentiates amphetamines. Antilogenessants is un

organized by 1.4, 15, and 0.8 times, respectively, the maximum recommended human dose of 30 mg/day (child) on a mg/m² of surface area basis, in the enantiomer ratio present in ADDERALE* (immediate-release) (d- to I - ratio of 3.1), was not clastogenic in mouse bone marrow micronucleus test in vivo and was negative when tested in the E. coli component of the Ames test in 7.0.4. Amphetamine (1.1 enantiomer ratio) has been reported to produce a positive response in the mouse bone marrow micronucleus test, an equivocal response in the Ames test, and engative responses in the Production of the Ames test in 7.0.4. Amphetamine, and chromosomal aberration assays. Suppletamine, in the enantioner ratio present in ADDERALL* (immediate-release) (d- to I - ratio of 3.1), did not adversely affect hillily or early embryonic development in the rat at doses of up to 20 mg/kg/day (approximately 5 times the maximum commended human dose of 30 mg/day on a mg/m² body surface area basis).

The production of th

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. There has been one report of severe congenital bony deformity, tracheo-esophageal fistula, and anal atresia (vater association) in a baby born to a woman who took dextroamphet-amine sulfate with lovastatin during the first timester of pregnancy. Amphetamines should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

**Nonteratogenic Effects: Infants born to mothers dependent on amphetamines have an increased risk of premature delivery and low birth weight. Also, these infants may experience symptoms of withdrawal as demonstrated by dysphoria, including agitation, and significant lassitude.

Usage in Nursing Mothers: Amphetamines are excreted in human milk. Mothers taking amphetamines should be advised to retrain from pursion.

3 years of age. Geriatric Use: ADDERALL XR® has not been studied in the geriatric population.

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Adverse event	% of pediatric patients
	discontinuing (n=595)
Anorexia (loss of appetite)	2.9
Insomnia	1.5
Weight loss	1.2
Emotional lability	1.0
Denreccion	0.7

Table 2 Adverse Events Reported by 5% or more of Adolescents Weighing ≤ 75 kg/165 lbs Receiving ADDERALL XR® with Higher Incidence Than Placebo in a 287 Patient Clinical Forced Weekly-Dose Titration Study* Loss of Appetite Metabolic/Nutritional Weight Loss b

Appears the same due to rounding Dose-related adverse events Vote: The following events did not meet the criterion for inclusion in Table 2 but were sported by 2% to 4% of adolescent patients receiving ADDERALL XR® with a higher ncidence than patients receiving placebo in this study: accidental injury, asthenia fatigue), of ymouth, dysepesia, emotional lability, nausea, somnolence, and vomiting.

Table 3 Adverse Events Reported by 5% or More of Adults Receiving ADDERALL XR* with Higher Incidence Than on Placebo in a 255 Patient Clinical Forced Weekly-Dose Titration Study*

Body System Preferred Term ADDERALL XR* Placebo Cardiovascular System Tachycardia Metabolic/Nutritional Weight Loss Irogenital System Urinary Tract Infection 5% 0% of the The following events did not meet the criterion for inclusion in Table 3 but were eported by 2% to 4% of adult patients receiving ADDERALL XR® with a higher inci-Urogenital System

Agency in U.K. Keeps Limits on Alzheimer's Rx

The clinical and cost effectiveness agency for England and Wales has affirmed its decision to allow the three drugs donepezil, galantamine, and rivastigmine to be prescribed only to those Alzheimer's patients with moderate disease.

In affirming its May final guidance on the three drugs, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on Oct. 11 rejected appeals from 10 organizations and companies. The NICE decision, which will be sent to the National Health Service in November, will limit the use of all three drugs for newly diagnosed Alzheimer's patients.

NICE's final decision was based on cost effectiveness. The drugs cost £890.60 to £1,248.30 per year but do not avert enough costs to justify that expenditure—for example, delaying by less than 2 months the need for full-time care, according to analyses prepared for the NICE committee drafting the guidance.

"Alzheimer's is a cruel and devastating illness, and we realize that today's announcement will be disappointing to people with Alzheimer's and those who treat and care for them," NICE Chief Executive Andrew Dillon said in a written statement. "But ... based on all the evidence, including data presented by the drug companies themselves, our experts have concluded that these drugs do not make enough of a difference for us to recommend their use for treating all stages of Alzheimer's disease.

The Alzheimer's Society criticized the decision. "This blatant cost cutting will rob people of priceless time early in the disease, and later clinicians will have no choice but to use dangerous sedatives that increase the risk of heart disease and stroke," Neil Hunt, chief executive of the Alzheimer's Society, said in a written statement.

—Jonathan Gardner