WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE

QSM/MC/IEA.87

19 July 1999

Information Exchange System

Alert No. 87

Pramipexole - sudden onset of sleep

EMEA. The European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMEA) has issued a statement on the antiparkinsonism product, pramipexole, concerning new information provided by the marketing authorization holders relating to sudden onset of sleep associated with pramipexole administration. Pramipexole was approved in the European Union in October 1997 and in the United States in July 1997.

The new information cited a total of 19 cases of sudden onset of sleep reported in the United States. Fourteen of these occurred while patients were driving, resulting in 9 car accidents with minor injuries in some cases. These episodes could occur at any time after initiation of the treatment and at any dose within the recommended range, and are potentially life-threatening to the patient and others depending on the circumstances and have been reported in some cases without awareness of warning signs, and therefore may occur unpredictably. Sudden onset of sleep is distinct from drowsiness or sedation as some patients experienced an acute uncontrollable urge to sleep. In most cases, where information was available, sudden onset of sleep did not recur after reduction of dosage or termination of pramipexole.

Following an initial review of this information the EMEA wishes to draw attention to the occurrence of these potentially unpredictable life-threatening episodes of sudden onset of sleep which have been rarely reported in association with pramipexole administration.

- **Patients being treated with pramipexole should be strongly advised not to drive or engage in other activities where impaired alertness could put themselves or others at risk of serious injury or death (e.g. operating machines).**
- **Patients who have experienced sudden onset of sleep should immediately contact their physician.**
- **Because of possible additive effects, caution should be advised when patients are taking other sedating medication or alcohol in combination with pramipexole.**

As an urgent measure, special warnings and special precautions for use have been introduced in prescribing and patient information through a rapid procedure at the request of the marketing authorization holders. The companies are sending out a letter informing health professionals in the European Union. The Committee on Proprietary Medicinal Products (CPMP) will make a more comprehensive evaluation of this issue and further information will be made available by the CPMP in due course.

Pramipexole is currently marketed as Mirapexin®; Pharmacia & Upjohn in Greece, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, and as Sifrol®: Boehringer Ingelheim in Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.

References: Public statement on Sifrol, Daquiran, Mirapexin (Pramipexole) - sudden onset of sleep. EMEA, London, 11 June 1999 (Reference no. EMEA/20642/99).

❖