North Central London
Joint Formulary Committee

Position Statement: Etoricoxib for rheumatologic indications

Etoricoxib (60mg and 90mg) is accepted for use within its licence for the symptomatic relief of pain and inflammation in rheumatological indications (including rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, osteoarthritis and acute gout) for specialist initiation followed by primary care continuation.[1]

The use of etoricoxib is restricted for use in patients with low cardiovascular risk after two standard non-selective, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID; for example, ibuprofen and naproxen), has failed to achieve symptom relief.

The recommended dose of etoricoxib is 60mg once daily.[2] **In some patients with insufficient relief from symptoms, an increased dose of 90mg once daily may increase efficacy.**

Once the patient is clinically stabilised, down-titration to a 60mg once daily dose may be appropriate and should be considered.

Doses greater than those recommended for each indication have either not demonstrated additional efficacy, have not been studied, or have been linked with higher risk of adverse effects. Therefore the dose of etoricoxib should not exceed 90 mg daily.

As the cardiovascular risks of etoricoxib may increase with dose and duration of exposure, the shortest duration possible and the lowest effective daily dose should be used.[3,4] **The patient's need for symptomatic relief and response to therapy should be re-evaluated periodically.**

In relation to cardiovascular risk, it should be noted that etoricoxib is contraindicated[5,6] **in:**

- **Congestive heart failure (NYHA II-IV).**
- **Patients with hypertension whose blood pressure is persistently elevated above 140/90 mmHg and has not been adequately controlled.**
- **Established ischaemic heart disease, peripheral arterial disease, and/or cerebrovascular disease.**

The above is not exhaustive, please refer to the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) for etoricoxib for a full list of contraindications and cautions.

The rheumatology specialist should ensure that any risks have been considered prior to requesting prescribing in primary care.

Patients with significant risk factors for cardiovascular events (e.g. hypertension, hyperlipidaemia, diabetes mellitus, smoking) should only be treated with etoricoxib after careful consideration.[6]

References

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3. Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency. NSAIDs and coxibs: balancing of cardiovascular and gastrointestinal risks. *GOV.UK* https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/nsaids-and-coxibs-balancing-of-cardiovascular-and-gastrointestinal-risks (2014).
4. Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency. Cox-2 selective inhibitors and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs' (NSAIDs): Cardiovascular safety. *GOV.UK* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cox-2-selective-inhibitors-and-non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-nsaids-cardiovascular-safety (2015).
5. Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency. Etoricoxib: prescribing to patients with high blood pressure. *GOV.UK* https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/etoricoxib-prescribing-to-patients-with-high-blood-pressure (2014).
6. Merck Sharp & Dohme Limited. Arcoxia 30 mg Film-coated Tablets - Summary of Product Characteristics. https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3302/smpc (2019).
7. South East London Area Prescribing Committee. Etoricoxib 60mg and 90mg tablets for the symptomatic relief of symptoms in adults with ankylosing spondylitis and rheumatoid arthritis.

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