



Recently Introduced Products

Drug Name	Indication	Potential Impact	Expected Avg. Annual Cost
Abilify	For the treatment of schizophrenia and related psychotic disorders, and the acute treatment of manic or mixed episodes in Bipolar I Disorder.	\$	\$1,686.30
Adcirca	For the treatment of idiopathic ("primary") pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH).	\$	\$9,541.10

\$: Est. drug plan expenditure increase of <1%* \$\$: Est. drug plan expenditure increase of 1-5%* \$\$\$: Est. drug plan expenditure increase of >5%*

Vidaza® - A new cancer treatment for patients with higher-risk MDS and AML

Vidaza® (azacitidine) is a drug indicated to treat patients with higher-risk Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS) and Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). MDSs are pre-cancerous disorders of the bone marrow, resulting in low blood cell counts and leading to a high risk of progression to AML. Therefore, patients with MDS generally show signs and symptoms of anemia and increased susceptibility to infection, bleeding and bruising. Each year, 290 to 435 Canadians are diagnosed with higher-risk MDS and AML, with 80-90% of cases occurring in people 60 years or older. Upon diagnosis of higher-risk MDS, 20-30% of patients progress to AML within 12 months^{1,2}.

Currently, the only curative treatment is bone marrow transplantation; however, 95% of patients are not eligible due to advanced age and lack of a matched donor. Patients ineligible for bone marrow transplantation are treated with best supportive care (BSC), which includes blood transfusions and treatment of secondary infection. BSC is sometimes used in combination with low-dose or intensive chemotherapy (off-label use). Vidaza® is the first treatment approved to treat higher-risk MDS and to extend survival^{1,2,3}.

In studies, Vidaza® increased survival from an average of 15 months to 24 months for higher-risk MDS patients and from 16 months to 24 months for AML patients. It also delayed the transformation of higher-risk MDS to AML by an average of 6 months^{2,3}. Vidaza® is administered by subcutaneous injection once daily for 7 days, followed by a rest period of 21 days. A minimum of 6 cycles is recommended, with treatment to continue until the drug is no longer effective or tolerated.

The average annual cost of treatment with Vidaza® is \$90,000, with an upper range of \$114,300. The drug is only available through Health Canada's Special Access Program (SAP). Vidaza® will be excluded from all ClaimSecure Drug Plans and Managed Formularies for the following reasons: 1) it treats a rare disease, 2) it has the potential to become cost-prohibitive, and 3) it is currently under review by provincial cancer agencies and is likely to be funded by provincial plans in the near future. If you wish to have Vidaza® covered under your group plan, please contact your ClaimSecure Client Service Associate.

If you require additional information about Vidaza®, please contact Genevieve Coutu, Clinical Pharmacist, Clinical Services Department, at (905) 949-3031 or 1-888-479-7587 ext.3031.

Recommendation: Exclude

ClaimSecure reserves the right to amend in part or in its entirety stated special authorization clinical guidelines

References:

- 1) Vidaza™ Private Payer Submission Binder. Celgene, November, 2009.
- 2) Besa, EC. Myelodysplastic Syndrome. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/207347-overview> Accessed December 14, 2009.
- 3) Fenaux, P *et al.* Efficacy of azacitidine compared with that of conventional care regimens in the treatment of higher-risk myelodysplastic syndromes: a randomized, open-label, phase III study. *Lancet* (2009) Vol 10: p. 223- 232.

