



Recently Introduced Products

Drug Name	Indication	Potential Impact	Expected Avg. Annual Cost
Effient®	For the secondary prevention of atherothrombotic events in patients with acute coronary syndrome (ACS)	\$	\$1,152.12
Duragesic® MAT	For the management of persistent, moderate to severe chronic pain	\$	\$2,481.39

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

Firmagon® – New hormone therapy for the treatment of advanced prostate cancer

Firmagon® (degaralix) is a new class of hormone therapy used to suppress testosterone in advanced hormone-dependent prostate cancer¹. Prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths among men. An estimated 1 in 7 men will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime. The incidence of disease increases with age, with approximately 80% of cases occurring in men over 60 years of age. In addition to a strong family history of prostate cancer, risk factors include smoking, physical inactivity, African descent and a diet high in animal fat. In the last 2 decades, advances in prostate cancer screening, permitting early detection and treatment, has considerably reduced mortality rates due to prostate cancer. However, despite these advances, the risk of disease progression to metastatic disease in patients with clinically localized disease remains high, at 30%-60%, thus the need for new therapies^{2,3}.

Similar to other types of cancer, appropriate treatment depends on the disease stage. Treatment for locally advanced disease includes radical prostatectomy (surgery) and local radiation, sometimes in combination with hormone suppression. For advanced disease stages, where the cancer has spread beyond the prostate, treatment options include hormonal therapy (suppression of the male hormones that feed the growth of prostate cancer cells) and chemotherapy^{2,3}. Currently available hormonal therapies similar to Firmagon® include Lupron®, Zoladex® and Eligard®. In clinical trials, it has been demonstrated that Firmagon® provides faster reduction in testosterone levels than Lupron®. In addition, Firmagon® does not cause the initial “testosterone surge” seen with other hormone therapies that potentially causes transient worsening of symptoms and tumour proliferation¹.

Firmagon® is administered by subcutaneous injection. The starting dose is two injections of 120 mg, followed by an 80 mg monthly injection. The average annual cost of treatment with Firmagon® is \$4,411. This is in line with the cost of the other available hormone therapies for prostate cancer. Therefore, like Lupron®, Zoladex® and Eligard®, Firmagon® is fully covered for the Open Drug Formularies, Specialty Drug Programs, and for ClaimSecure groups that subscribe to the Managed Formulary.

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

Recommendation: Fully Cover

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

References:

- 1) Firmagon™ Private Payer Submission Binder. Ferring Pharmaceuticals, February, 2010.
- 2) Terris, MK. Prostate Cancer – Metastatic and Advanced Disease. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/454114-overview>. Accessed May 20, 2010.
- 3) Public Health Agency of Canada. Prostate Cancer. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/cancer/prostate_cancer_cancer_prostate-eng.php. Accessed May 20, 2010.

