IRISH MEDICINES BOARD

# TRAZODONE

## Reminder on the Risk of Postural Hypotension and Somnolence in the Elderly Particularly in the Context of Polypharmacy

Trazodone* is an antidepressant authorised in Ireland for the relief of symptoms in depression including depression accompanied by anxiety. It is a triazolopyridine derivative, chemically unrelated to known tricyclic, tetracyclic and other antidepressant agents. At low sub-therapeutic doses, trazodone acts as a 5-HT antagonist while at higher doses it inhibits 5-HT reuptake. It is also a weak inhibitor of noradrenaline re-uptake.

In response to information from case reports, the available evidence on the known risks of postural hypotension and somnolence with trazodone was recently reviewed at EU level. This review confirmed that such adverse events may occur more often in elderly patients particularly with concomitant use of other potentially sedative or antihypertensive medication.

Careful consideration should be given to the potential for the additive effects of concomitant medication such as psychotropics or antihypertensives, or in the presence of risk factors such as co-morbid disease, which may exacerbate these reactions. It is recommended that the patient/carer is informed of the potential for these reactions with appropriate monitoring for such effects following initiation of therapy, prior to and following upward dose titration. For very elderly or frail patients, the recommended initial dose is reduced to 100mg a day, administered in divided doses or as a single night time dose. This may be incrementally increased under supervision, according to tolerance and efficacy. In general, single doses above 100mg should be avoided in these patients.

The product information has been strengthened to highlight the risk of potential additive effects of concomitant medication and the possible impact of co-morbid conditions.

### Key Messages

- Elderly patients may more often experience orthostatic hypotension, somnolence and other anticholinergic effects of trazodone.
- Careful consideration should be given to the potential for additive effects with concomitant medication such as with other psychotropics or antihypertensives or in the presence of risk factors such as comorbid disease.
- There should be particular awareness of the potential for such effects following initiation of therapy, prior to and following upward dose titration.

**Products available in Ireland include Molipaxin. Further details are available at www.imb.ie*