

Summary of Product Characteristics

1 NAME OF THE MEDICINAL PRODUCT

Finasteride 5mg Film-coated Tablets

2 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE COMPOSITION

Each tablet contains 5 mg of the active ingredient finasteride.

Excipient: Each tablet contains 102mg lactose (as monohydrate).

For a full list of excipients, see section 6.1.

3 PHARMACEUTICAL FORM

Film-coated tablet (tablet).

Blue, apple-shaped, tablets, marked 'FINASTERIDE' on one side and 'MSD 72' on the other.

4 CLINICAL PARTICULARS

4.1 Therapeutic Indications

'Finasteride' is indicated for the treatment and control of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and for the prevention of urologic events to:

- reduce the risk of acute urinary retention
- reduce the risk of surgery including transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) and prostatectomy.

'Finasteride' causes regression of the enlarged prostate, improves urinary flow and improves the symptoms associated with BPH.

Patients with an enlarged prostate are the appropriate candidates for therapy with 'Finasteride'.

4.2 Posology and method of administration

The recommended dosage is one 5 mg tablet daily, with or without food.

'Finasteride' can be administered alone or in combination with the alpha-blocker doxazosin (see section 5.1 'Pharmacodynamic properties').

Although early improvement in symptoms may be seen, treatment for at least six months may be necessary to assess whether a beneficial response has been achieved. The risk of acute urinary retention is reduced within four months of treatment.

Use in renal insufficiency

No adjustment in dosage is required in patients with varying degrees of renal insufficiency (creatinine clearances as low as 9 ml/min), as pharmacokinetic studies did not indicate any change in the disposition of finasteride.

Use in the elderly

No dosage adjustment is required in elderly patients.

4.3 Contraindications

'Finasteride' is not indicated for use in women or children. 'Finasteride' is contra-indicated in the following: hypersensitivity to any component of this product; pregnancy - women when they are or may potentially be pregnant (see 4.6 'Pregnancy and lactation', *Exposure to finasteride - risk to male foetus*).

4.4 Special warnings and precautions for use

General

To avoid obstructive complications it is important that patients with large residual urine and/or heavily decreased urinary flow are carefully controlled. The possibility of surgery should be an option.

Effects on prostate-specific antigen (PSA) and prostate cancer detection:

No clinical benefit has yet been demonstrated in patients with prostate cancer treated with 'Finasteride'. Patients with BPH and elevated PSA were monitored in controlled clinical studies with serial PSAs and prostate biopsies. In these BPH studies, 'Finasteride' did not appear to alter the rate of prostate cancer detection and the overall incidence of prostate cancer was not significantly different in patients treated with 'Finasteride' or placebo.

Digital rectal examination, as well as other evaluations for prostate cancer, should be performed on patients with BPH prior to initiating therapy with 'Finasteride' and periodically thereafter. Serum PSA is also used for prostate cancer detection. Generally, a baseline PSA >10 ng/ml (Hybritech) prompts further evaluation and consideration of biopsy; for PSA levels between 4 and 10 ng/ml, further evaluation is advisable. There is considerable overlap in PSA levels among men with and without prostate cancer. Therefore, in men with BPH, PSA values within the normal reference range do not rule out prostate cancer regardless of treatment with 'Finasteride'. A baseline PSA <4 ng/ml does not exclude prostate cancer.

'Finasteride' causes a decrease in serum PSA concentrations by approximately 50% in patients with BPH even in the presence of prostate cancer. This decrease in serum PSA levels in patients with BPH treated with 'Finasteride' should be considered when evaluating PSA data and does not rule out concomitant prostate cancer. This decrease is predictable over the entire range of PSA values, although it may vary in individual patients. Analysis of PSA data from over 3,000 patients in the four-year, double-blind, placebo-controlled 'Finasteride' Long-term Efficacy and Safety Study (PLESS) confirmed that in typical patients treated with 'Finasteride' for six months or more, PSA values should be doubled for comparison with normal ranges in untreated men. This adjustment preserves the sensitivity and specificity of the PSA assay and maintains its ability to detect prostate cancer.

Any sustained increase in PSA levels of patients treated with finasteride should be carefully evaluated, including consideration of non-compliance to therapy with 'Finasteride'.

Percent free PSA (free to total PSA ratio) is not significantly decreased by 'Finasteride' and remains constant even under the influence of 'Finasteride'. When percent free PSA is used as an aid in the detection of prostate cancer, no adjustment is necessary.

Drug/laboratory test interactions

Effect on levels of PSA

Serum PSA concentration is correlated with patient age and prostatic volume, and prostatic volume is correlated with patient age. When PSA laboratory determinations are evaluated, consideration should be given to the fact that PSA levels decrease in patients treated with FINASTERIDE. In most patients, a rapid decrease in PSA is seen within the first months of therapy, after which time PSA levels stabilize to a new baseline. The post-treatment baseline approximates half of the pre-treatment value. Therefore, in typical patients treated with FINASTERIDE for six months or more, PSA values should be doubled for comparison to normal ranges in untreated men. For clinical interpretation, see 4.4 Special warnings and precautions for use, Effects on PSA and prostate cancer detection.

Breast cancer in men

Breast cancer has been reported in men taking finasteride 5 mg during clinical trials and the post-marketing period. Physicians should instruct their patients to promptly report any changes in their breast tissue such as lumps, pain,

gynaecomastia or nipple discharge.

Pediatric use

FINASTERIDE is not indicated for use in children.

Safety and effectiveness in children have not been established.

Lactose

The tablet contains lactose monohydrate. Patients with any of the following genetic deficiencies should not take this drug: galactose intolerance, total lactase deficiency or glucose-galactose malabsorption.

Hepatic insufficiency

The effect of hepatic insufficiency on the pharmacokinetics of finasteride has not been studied.

4.5 Interaction with other medicinal products and other forms of interaction

No clinically important drug interactions have been identified. Finasteride is metabolized primarily via, but does not appear to affect significantly, the cytochrome P450 3A4 system. Although the risk for finasteride to affect the pharmacokinetics of other drugs is estimated to be small, it is probable that inhibitors and inducers of cytochrome P450 3A4 will affect the plasma concentration of finasteride. However, based on established safety margins, any increase due to concomitant use of such inhibitors is unlikely to be of clinical significance. Compounds which have been tested in man include propranolol, digoxin, glibenclamide, warfarin, theophylline, and phenazone and no clinically meaningful interactions were found.

Other concomitant therapy: Although specific interaction studies were not performed in clinical studies, 'Finasteride' was used concomitantly with ACE inhibitors, alpha-blockers, beta-blockers, calcium-channel blockers, cardiac nitrates, diuretics, H₂ antagonists, HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) including aspirin and paracetamol, quinolones and benzodiazepines without evidence of clinically significant adverse interactions.

4.6 Fertility, pregnancy and lactation

Pregnancy: 'Finasteride' is contra-indicated in women when they are or may potentially be pregnant (see 4.3 'Contra-indications').

Because of the ability of Type II 5 α -reductase inhibitors to inhibit conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone, these drugs, including finasteride, may cause abnormalities of the external genitalia of a male foetus when administered to a pregnant woman.

Exposure to finasteride - risk to male foetus

Women should not handle crushed or broken tablets of 'Finasteride' when they are or may potentially be pregnant, because of the possibility of absorption of finasteride and the subsequent potential risk to a male foetus (see *Pregnancy*). 'Finasteride' tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets have not been broken or crushed.

Small amounts of finasteride have been recovered from the semen in subjects receiving finasteride 5 mg/day. It is not known whether a male foetus may be adversely affected if his mother is exposed to the semen of a patient being treated with finasteride. When the patient's sexual partner is or may potentially be pregnant, the patient is recommended to minimise exposure of his partner to semen.

Lactation: 'Finasteride' is not indicated for use in women. It is not known whether finasteride is excreted in human milk.

4.7 Effects on ability to drive and use machines

There are no data to suggest that FINASTERIDE affects the ability to drive or use machines.

4.8 Undesirable effects

The most frequent adverse reactions are impotence and decreased libido. These adverse reactions occur early in the course of therapy and resolve with continued treatment in the majority of patients.

The adverse reactions reported during clinical trials and/or post-marketing use with FINASTERIDE and/or finasteride at lower doses are listed in the table below.

Frequency of adverse reactions is determined as follows:

Very common ($\geq 1/10$), Common ($\geq 1/100$ to $< 1/10$), Uncommon ($\geq 1/1,000$ to $< 1/100$),

Rare ($\geq 1/10,000$ to $< 1/1,000$), Very rare ($< 1/10,000$), not known (cannot be estimated from the available data).

Because these reactions are reported voluntarily from a population of uncertain size, it is not always possible to reliably estimate the frequency or establish a causal relationship to drug exposure.

System Organ Class	Frequency: adverse reaction
Investigations	<i>Common: decreased volume of ejaculate</i>
Cardiac disorders	<i>Unknown: palpitation</i>
Skin and subcutaneous tissue disorders	<i>Uncommon: rash Unknown: pruritus, urticaria</i>
Immune system disorders	<i>Unknown: hypersensitivity reactions such as angioedema (including swelling of the lips, tongue, throat and face)</i>
Hepatobiliary disorders	<i>Unknown: increased hepatic enzymes</i>
Reproductive system and breast disorders	<i>Common: impotence Uncommon: ejaculation disorder, breast tenderness, breast enlargement Unknown : sexual dysfunction (erectile dysfunction and ejaculation disorders) that continued after discontinuation of treatment; testicular pain, male infertility and/or poor seminal quality. Normalization or improvement of seminal quality has been reported after discontinuation of finasteride</i>
Psychiatric disorders	<i>Common: decreased libido Unknown: depression, decreased libido that continued after discontinuation of treatment</i>

In addition, the following has been reported in clinical trials and post-marketing use: male breast cancer (see 4.4 Special warnings and precautions for use).

Medical therapy of prostatic symptoms (MTOPS)

The MTOPS study compared finasteride 5 mg/day (n=768), doxazosin 4 or 8 mg/day (n=756), combination therapy of finasteride 5 mg/day and doxazosin 4 or 8 mg/day (n=786), and placebo (n=737). In this study, the safety and tolerability profile of the combination therapy was generally consistent with the profiles of the individual components. The incidence of ejaculation disorder events without regard to drug relationship were: finasteride 8.3%, doxazosin 5.3%, combination 15.0%, placebo 3.9%.

Other long-term data

In a 7 year placebo-controlled trial that enrolled 18,882 healthy men, of whom 9060 had prostate needle biopsy data available for analysis, prostate cancer was detected in 803 (18.4%) men receiving 'Finasteride' and 1147 (24.4%) men

receiving placebo. A greater number of high grade tumours (Gleason score 7-10) were detected on needle biopsy in patients in the 'Finasteride' group, 280 (6.4%) vs 237 (5.1%). Additional analyses suggest that the increase in the prevalence of high-grade prostate cancer observed in the 'Finasteride' group may be explained by a detection bias due to the effect of 'Finasteride' on prostate volume. The relationship between long-term use of 'Finasteride' and tumours with Gleason scores 7-10 is unknown.

Laboratory test findings

Serum PSA concentration is correlated with patient age and prostatic volume, and prostatic volume is correlated with patient age. When PSA laboratory determinations are evaluated, consideration should be given to the fact that PSA levels decrease in patients treated with 'Finasteride' (see section 4.4 Special warnings and special precautions for use).

Reporting of suspected adverse reactions

Reporting suspected adverse reactions after authorisation of the medicinal product is important. It allows continued monitoring of the benefit/risk balance of the medicinal product. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse reactions via IMB Pharmacovigilance, Earlsfort Terrace, IRL - Dublin 2; Tel: +353 1 6764971; Fax: +353 1 6762517. Website: www.imb.ie; e-mail: imbpharmacovigilance@imb.ie

4.9 Overdose

No specific treatment of overdosage with 'Finasteride' is recommended. Patients have received single doses of 'Finasteride' up to 400 mg and multiple doses of 'Finasteride' up to 80 mg/day for up to three months without any adverse effects.

5 PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

5.1 Pharmacodynamic properties

ATC Code: G04CB01

Finasteride is a competitive inhibitor of human Type II 5 α -reductase, an intracellular enzyme which metabolises testosterone into the more potent androgen, dihydrotestosterone (DHT). In benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), enlargement of the prostate gland is dependent upon the conversion of testosterone to DHT within the prostate. 'Finasteride' is highly effective in reducing circulating and intraprostatic DHT. Finasteride has no affinity for the androgen receptor.

In clinical studies of patients with moderate to severe symptoms of BPH, an enlarged prostate on digital rectal examination and low residual urinary volumes, 'Finasteride' reduced the incidence of acute retention of urine from 7/100 to 3/100 over four years and the need for surgery (TURP or prostatectomy) from 10/100 to 5/100. These reductions were associated with a 2-point improvement in QUASI-AUA symptom score (range 0-34), a sustained regression in prostate volume of approximately 20% and a sustained increase in urinary flow rate.

Medical therapy of prostatic symptoms

The Medical Therapy of Prostatic Symptoms (MTOPS) Trial was a 4- to 6-year study in 3047 men with symptomatic BPH who were randomised to receive finasteride 5 mg/day, doxazosin 4 or 8 mg/day*, the combination of finasteride 5 mg/day and doxazosin 4 or 8 mg/day*, or placebo. The primary endpoint was time to clinical progression of BPH, defined as a ≥ 4 point confirmed increase from baseline in symptom score, acute urinary retention, BPH-related renal insufficiency, recurrent urinary tract infections or urosepsis, or incontinence. Compared to placebo, treatment with finasteride, doxazosin, or combination therapy resulted in a significant reduction in the risk of clinical progression of BPH by 34 (p=0.002), 39 (p<0.001), and 67% (p<0.001), respectively. The majority of the events (274 out of 351) that constituted BPH progression were confirmed ≥ 4 point increases in symptom score; the risk of symptom score progression was reduced by 30 (95% CI 6 to 48%), 46 (95% CI 25 to 60%), and 64% (95% CI 48 to 75%) in the finasteride, doxazosin, and combination groups, respectively, compared to placebo. Acute urinary retention accounted for 41 of the 351 events of BPH progression; the risk of developing acute urinary retention was reduced by 67

($p=0.011$), 31 ($p=0.296$), and 79% ($p=0.001$) in the finasteride, doxazosin, and combination groups, respectively, compared to placebo. Only the finasteride and combination therapy groups were significantly different from placebo.

* Titrated from 1 mg to 4 or 8 mg as tolerated over a 3-week period.

5.2 Pharmacokinetic properties

After an oral dose of ^{14}C -finasteride in man, 39% of the dose was excreted in the urine in the form of metabolites (virtually no unchanged drug was excreted in the urine), and 57% of total dose was excreted in the faeces. Two metabolites have been identified which possess only a small fraction of the 5α -reductase activity of finasteride.

The oral bioavailability of finasteride is approximately 80%, relative to an intravenous reference dose, and is unaffected by food. Maximum plasma concentrations are reached approximately two hours after dosing and the absorption is complete within 6–8 hours. Protein binding is approximately 93%. Plasma clearance and the volume of distribution are approximately 165 ml/min and 76 l, respectively.

In the elderly, the elimination rate of finasteride is somewhat decreased. Half-life is prolonged from a mean half-life of approximately 6 hours in men aged 18–60 years to 8 hours in men aged more than 70 years. This is of no clinical significance and does not warrant a reduction in dosage.

In patients with chronic renal impairment, whose creatinine clearance ranged from 9 to 55 ml/min, the disposition of a single dose of ^{14}C -finasteride was not different from that in healthy volunteers. Protein binding also did not differ in patients with renal impairment. A portion of the metabolites which normally is excreted renally was excreted in the faeces. It therefore appears that faecal excretion increases commensurate to the decrease in urinary excretion of metabolites. Dosage adjustment in non-dialysed patients with renal impairment is not necessary.

There are no data available in patients with hepatic insufficiency.

Finasteride has been found to cross the blood–brain barrier. Small amounts of finasteride have been recovered in the seminal fluid of treated patients.

5.3 Preclinical safety data

Non-clinical data reveal no special hazard for humans based on conventional studies of repeated dose toxicity, genotoxicity, and carcinogenic potential. Reproduction toxicology studies in male rats have demonstrated reduced prostate and seminal vesicular weights, reduced secretion from accessory genital glands and reduced fertility index (caused by the primary pharmacological effect of finasteride). The clinical relevance of these findings is unclear. Dose-dependent development of hypospadias was observed in the male offspring of pregnant rats given finasteride at doses ranging from 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$ to 100 $\text{mg}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$ (1 to 1000 times the recommended human dose of 5 mg/day) at an incidence of 3.6 to 100%. Additionally, pregnant rats produced male offspring with decreased prostatic and seminal vesicular weights, delayed preputial separation, and transient nipple development when given finasteride at doses $\geq 30\ \mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$ ($\geq 30\%$ of the recommended human dose of 5 mg/day), and decreased anogenital distance when given finasteride in doses $\geq 3\ \mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$ ($\geq 3\%$ of the recommended human dose of 5 mg/day). The critical period during which these effects can be induced has been defined in rats as days 16-17 of gestation.

Intravenous administration of finasteride to pregnant rhesus monkeys at doses up to 800 ng/day during the entire period of embryonic and foetal development resulted in no abnormalities in male foetuses. This dose is about 60-120 times higher than the estimated amount in semen of a man who have taken 5 mg finasteride, and to which a woman could be exposed via semen. In confirmation of the relevance of the Rhesus model for human foetal development, oral administration of finasteride 2 $\text{mg}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$ (the systemic exposure (AUC) of monkeys was slightly higher (3x) than that of men who have taken 5 mg finasteride, or approximately 1-2 million times the estimated amount of finasteride in semen) to pregnant monkeys resulted in external genital abnormalities in male foetuses. No other abnormalities were observed in male foetuses and no finasteride-related abnormalities were observed in female foetuses at any dose.

6 PHARMACEUTICAL PARTICULARS

6.1 List of excipients

Tablet core:

Cellulose, Microcrystalline (E460)
Docusate sodium
Lactose monohydrate
Magnesium stearate (E572)
Pregelatinised maize starch
Sodium starch glycolate Type A
Yellow iron oxide (E172)

Film coating:

Hydroxypropylcellulose (E463)
Indigo carmine aluminium lake (E132)
Hypromellose (E464)
Talc
Titanium dioxide (E171)

6.2 Incompatibilities

Not applicable.

6.3 Shelf life

3 years.

6.4 Special precautions for storage

Do not store above 30°C. Store in original package.

6.5 Nature and contents of container

Calendar pack: Opaque PVC/PE/PVDC blisters lidded with aluminium foil; packs of 28 tablets.

6.6 Special precautions for disposal of a used medicinal product or waste materials derived from such medicinal product and other handling of the product

Women should not handle crushed or broken 'Finasteride' Tablets when they are or may potentially be pregnant (see 4.3 'Contra-indications', 4.6 'Pregnancy and lactation', *Exposure to finasteride - risk to male foetus*).

7 MARKETING AUTHORISATION HOLDER

Merck Sharp & Dohme Ireland (Human Health) Limited
Red Oak North
South County Business Park
Leopardstown
Dublin 18
Ireland

8 MARKETING AUTHORISATION NUMBER

PA1286/044/001

9 DATE OF FIRST AUTHORISATION/RENEWAL OF THE AUTHORISATION

Date of first authorisation: 28th February 2014

10 DATE OF REVISION OF THE TEXT