

Pharmacy Policy Bulletin

Title: Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™)

Policy #: FS.CLIN.70

Application of pharmacy policy is determined by benefits and contracts. Benefits may vary based on product line, group, or contract. Some medications may be subject to precertification, age, gender or quantity restrictions. Individual member benefits must be verified.

This pharmacy policy document describes the status of pharmaceutical information and/or technology at the time the document was developed. Since that time, new information relating to drug efficacy, interactions, contraindications, dosage, administration routes, safety, or FDA approval may have changed. This pharmacy policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as scientific and medical literature becomes available. This information may include new FDA-approved indications, withdrawals, or other FDA alerts. This type of information is relevant not only when considering whether this policy should be updated, but also when applying it to current requests for coverage.

Members are advised to use participating pharmacies in order to receive the highest level of benefits.

Intent

Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) is indicated for the treatment of major depressive disorder.

The use of desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) requires prior authorization (i.e. clinical pharmacy and/or Medical Director review).

Description:

Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) is a selective serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI). Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) is the major active metabolite of the antidepressant drug venlafaxine. Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) blocks the reuptake of serotonin and norepinephrine in the central nervous system allowing for potentiation of these neurotransmitters. The increased levels of serotonin and norepinephrine are thought to account for its clinical efficacy.

Policy

Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) is approved when there is a documentation of a diagnosis of major depressive disorder (MDD) and **one** of the following:

- Documentation of a trial and failure/intolerance to **two** of the following agents:
 - A bupropion-containing product
 - Citalopram
 - Duloxetine (Cymbalta®)
 - Escitalopram (Lexapro®)
 - A fluoxetine-containing product
 - Fluvoxamine
 - A paroxetine-containing product
 - Sertraline
 - A venlafaxine-containing product
- Documentation of continuous therapy with Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq)

Guidelines

Refer to the specific manufacturer's prescribing information for administration and dosage details and any applicable Black Box warnings.

BENEFIT APPLICATION

Subject to the terms and conditions of the applicable benefit contract, the applicable drug(s) identified in this policy is (are) covered under the pharmacy benefits of the Company's products when the medical necessity criteria listed in this pharmacy policy are met. Any products that are experimental/investigational or cosmetic are benefit contract exclusions for all products of the Company.

References

DeMartinis NA, Yeung PP, Entsuah R, et al. A double blind placebo-controlled study of the efficacy and safety of desvenlafaxine succinate in the treatment of major depressive disorder. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2007; 68:5: 677-688.

Liebowitz MR, Yeung PP, Entsuah R. A randomized double blind placebo-controlled trial of desvenlafaxine succinate in adult outpatients with major depressive disorder. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2007; 68:11: 1663-1672.

Facts and Comparisons website. [Pristiq] Available at: <http://www.factsandcomparisons.com>. Accessed October 27, 2011.

Pristiq™ [package insert]. Philadelphia, PA: Wyeth Pharmaceuticals; September 2010.

Wyeth finally cleared for Pristiq lift-off, but with lower dose. Available at: <http://www.thepinksheet.com>. Accessed October 27, 2011.

Applicable Drugs

i Inclusion of a drug in this table does not imply coverage. Eligibility, benefits, limitations, exclusions, precertification/referral requirements, provider contracts, and Company policies apply.

| Drug Name | Strength and/or formulation |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq) | All |

Cross References

Policy version number: 3.0
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