

# dupilumab (DUPIXENT®) in adults with atopic dermatitis



An option for very troublesome eczema after failure of ciclosporin

## Abstract

● Atopic dermatitis (also called atopic eczema) is a chronic relapsing-remitting inflammatory skin condition. The severity of cutaneous symptoms and their impact on daily life vary greatly from one patient to another.

● The first-choice treatments for alleviating the symptoms of atopic dermatitis are non-drug measures, emollients, and topical corticosteroids during flares. For adults whose daily life is severely affected despite these measures, treatment with an oral immunosuppressant, especially *ciclosporin*, should be considered. The use of immunosuppressants is limited by their numerous and severe adverse effects.

● *Dupilumab* (Dupixent®, Sanofi Aventis) is a monoclonal antibody directed against the receptors for interleukins IL-4 and IL-13, which appear to be involved in the inflammatory response that occurs in atopic dermatitis. It has been authorised in the European Union for subcutaneous use in adults with moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis, after failure of topical treatments.

● *Dupilumab* has not been compared with *ciclosporin* or other immunosuppressants.

● Clinical evaluation is mainly based on 4 double-blind randomised trials that compared *dupilumab* with placebo for 16 to 52 weeks in a total of 2444 adults with moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis inadequately controlled by topical treatments. One of the trials included patients who could not receive *ciclosporin* or in whom *ciclosporin* had failed.

● The proportion of “responders” (free from eczema symptoms or whose eczema was rated as minor by the investigators) was 40% to 50% in the *dupilumab* groups, versus 10% to 20% in the placebo groups. Re-emergence of symptoms was observed after *dupilumab* discontinuation.

● The main adverse effects of *dupilumab* observed in clinical trials included injection site reactions, eye disorders, oral herpes, and hypersensitivity reactions.

## POSSIBLY HELPFUL

In patients with troublesome atopic dermatitis in whom topical treatments have failed, it has not been shown that *dupilumab* is at least as effective as *ciclosporin* or any other immunosuppressant. After failure of *ciclosporin*, an additional 30% of patients saw a significant improvement in their symptoms with *dupilumab*, as compared with placebo. *Dupilumab*'s adverse effect profile appears to differ from that of *ciclosporin*, but in the absence of long-term data, much remains unknown about its harms. Based on the evaluation data available in late 2018, it is more prudent to only consider *dupilumab* therapy for patients in whom *ciclosporin* has failed and whose atopic dermatitis is very troublesome and greatly impacts their daily life.

**DUPIXENT® - *dupilumab*** solution for subcutaneous injection

• 300 mg of *dupilumab* per pre-filled syringe

■ anti-interleukin-4 and 13 receptor monoclonal antibody

■ **Indication:** “moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis in adult patients who are candidates for systemic therapy”. [EU centralised procedure]

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