# ferumoxytol

### **NEW DRUG**

### An intravenous iron, riskier than iron sucrose

 Pharmacovigilance data and the results of a clinical trial show that serious adverse events are more frequent with ferumoxytol than with iron sucrose.



In patients with chronic renal failure, *iron* sucrose is the standard treatment for iron-deficiency anae-

mia when the intravenous route is preferable to the oral route (1-3). IV *iron polymaltose* has no clinical advantages, and IV *iron dextran* carries too high a risk of severe hypersensitivity reactions.

Ferumoxytol (Rienso° Takeda), another intravenous iron product, has been authorised for use in this setting. It is a colloidal complex of iron and sugar dextran, also known as polyglucose sorbitol carboxymethylether (3). Does it have any advantages over IV iron sucrose?

A trial versus IV iron sucrose. According to reports issued by the European and US drug regulatory agencies, clinical evaluation of IV *ferumoxytol* is based on three randomised, unblinded trials versus oral iron in 837 patients with chronic renal failure, not all of whom were on haemodialysis (3,4).

A randomised, unblinded trial comparing IV *ferumoxytol* with IV *iron sucrose* in 605 patients in whom oral iron had failed showed no difference between the groups in terms of the increase in haemoglobin during the 5 weeks of treatment (5).

More serious adverse effects. In the three trials versus oral iron, the adverse effect profile of IV *ferumoxytol* was similar to that of other IV iron products, and included cutaneous disorders, gastro-intestinal disorders, fever, muscle and joint pain, and hypersensitivity reactions (a)(3,4).

In the unblinded trial versus IV *iron sucrose*, adverse effects were similarly frequent with the 2 products, but severe adverse effects occurred in 4.2% of patients treated with *ferumoxytol* versus 2.5% of those receiving *iron sucrose* (5).

A US pharmacovigilance review of different IV iron products examined adverse effects reported between October 2009 and June 2010 (6). The fre-

quency of fatal, severe or serious adverse reactions per million units sold was significantly higher with *ferumoxy-tol* than with *iron sucrose* and with another *iron dextran* product.

**Pregnancy.** Animal studies of *feru-moxytol* have shown reproductive toxicity; this drug should therefore be avoided during pregnancy (7).

**Convenience.** *Iron sucrose* is infused slowly, after dilution, while *ferumoxytol* is injected rapidly, without dilution. In dialysis patients, *ferumoxytol* is injected directly into the dialysis line, as is *iron sucrose*.

In practice: do not use. In patients requiring intravenous iron administration, there is no firm evidence that *ferumoxytol* is more effective than *iron sucrose*, while it appears to have more serious adverse effects. It is better to avoid using *ferumoxytol* and to choose *iron sucrose* instead.

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 Ferumoxytol has paramagnetic properties that may affect the diagnostic performance of magnetic resonance imaging (ref 7).

## Selected references from Prescrire's literature search.



Despite our request for information, Takeda provided us with no documentation on its product.

- 1- Prescrire Rédaction "SMR "insuffisant" du fer dextran: à quand son retrait du marché?" *Rev Prescrire* 2012; **32** (349): 819.
- **2-** Prescrire Rédaction "fer polymaltose intraveineux-Ferinject°. 3° fer intraveineux: prudence" *Rev Prescrire* 2011; **31** (328): 97 + (329): Inside front cover.
- **3-** EMA CHMP "Assessment report-Rienso. EMEA/H/C/2215" 19 April 2012: 79 pages. **4-** US FDA CDER "Application number 22-180.
- **4-** US FDA CDER "Application number 22-180. Medical review(s)-ferumoxytol" 17 December 2008: 121 pages.
- **5-** Hetzel D et al. "Potential new treatment option for iron deficiency anemia patients with a history of unsatisfactory oral iron therapy-results of a phase III, randomized, open-label, active-controlled trial of ferumoxytol" *Blood* 2012; **120** (21): abstract 2099. **6-** Bailie GR "Comparison of rates of reported adverse events associated with i.v. iron products in the United States" *Am J Health Syst Pharm* 2012; **69**

**7-**European Commission "SPC-Rienso" 29 October 2012: 14 pages.

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### **RIENSO°**

Solution for IV injection

• **510 mg** of iron *(ferumoxytol)* per 17-ml vial (30 mg/ml)

#### antianaemic

■ Indication: "(..) iron deficiency anaemia in adult patients with chronic kidney disease (...)".

[EU marketing authorisation, centralised procedure]