

Memo

Date: January 18, 2005

Subject: DRC Recommendations to DCC and DHS

To: Scott Pace and Roy Jeffus

From: Henry F. Simmons, Jr., MD, Ph.D.  
Chairman DRC

At its 01/14/05 meeting, the Drug Review Committee considered the potential toxicity and therapeutic roles of cetirizine [Zyrtec], desloratadine [Clarinx], fexofenadine [Allegra], and loratadine [Claritin-OTC] in the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis [SAR], perennial allergic rhinitis [PAR] and chronic ideopathic urticaria [CIU]. Dr. Helfand of the EPC listened by telephone and responded to questions.

The four recommendations that follow arose from that meeting and are based upon the bulk of the best available evidence-based data as perceived by the voting members of the Committee.

1. None of the four drugs presents a special risk relative to the others.
2. Cetirizine, loratadine and fexofenadine do not differ in their ability to improve total symptom scores in adults. However, there is inadequate data to include desloratadine in this group at present.
3. There is insufficient pediatric data to prefer one or more drugs over the others for improving total symptom scores in children. However, the liquid dosing forms for cetirizine, desloratadine and loratadine may facilitate dosing.
4. None of the drugs offer a special benefit to other subgroups in improving total symptom scores.

Henry F. Simmons, Jr.  
Chairman, DRC