

Rx

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UPDATE



UCB Pharma Launches Venlafaxine Extended-Release Tablets

As part of our pharmacy benefit management services, Catalyst Rx partners with clients, members, physicians, and pharmacies to provide updates regarding industry news and changes to product availability.

The generic drug manufacturer UCB Pharma recently started sales and distribution of venlafaxine extended-release (ER) tablets. Venlafaxine ER tablets contain the same active ingredient found in Effexor XR[®]. However, while Effexor XR comes as capsules, UCB's venlafaxine ER product comes as tablets. As such, venlafaxine ER tablets are considered "branded" products and not a generic equivalent to Effexor XR. Pharmacists in most states cannot automatically substitute one for another and must contact a physician to make the switch. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does consider the products to be therapeutically equivalent despite the difference in dosage forms. A generic version of Effexor XR capsules is not expected to be available until after the patent expires in mid 2010.

Effexor XR capsules are indicated for major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder and social anxiety disorder. Venlafaxine ER tablets are currently only indicated for the treatment of major depressive disorder and social anxiety disorder. Venlafaxine ER tablets are available in four strengths: 37.5mg, 75mg, 150mg and 225mg. The 225mg strength is a new strength that Effexor XR capsules do not offer. The tablet version of venlafaxine ER is estimated to cost approximately 20 percent less than its respective Effexor XR version counterpart.

Catalyst Rx has placed venlafaxine ER tablets on a preferred (Tier 2) formulary status, the same tier status as Effexor XR capsules. Health care professionals and consumers may consider use of the tablet formulation when appropriate.

Catalyst Rx will continue to carefully monitor the situation and provide updates as appropriate. If you have questions, please call the Catalyst Rx Clinical Department at 702-869-4600 or the Catalyst Rx Customer Service Department at 1-800-997-3784.

Sources:

http://www.fda.gov/cder/foi/summary_review/2008/022104s000_SUMR.pdf

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/foi/applletter/2008/022104s000ltr.pdf>

<http://www.cafepharma.com/boards/showthread.php?p=2549354>