BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

APRETUDE
(cabotegravir extended-release injectable suspension)

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Apretude is a long-acting injectable medication containing cabotegravir, a human immunodeficiency virus type-1 (HIV-1) integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI). Cabotegravir inhibits HIV integrase by binding to the integrase active site and blocking the strand transfer step of retroviral deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) integration that is essential for the HIV replication cycle (1).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indication: Apretude is an HIV-1 integrase strand transfer inhibitor (INSTI) indicated in at-risk adults and adolescents weighing at least 35 kg for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce the risk of sexually acquired HIV-1 infection. Individuals must have a negative HIV-1 test prior to initiating Apretude (with or without an oral lead-in with oral cabotegravir) for HIV-1 PrEP (1).

Apretude has a boxed warning advising that individuals must be tested before initiation of Apretude and at each subsequent injection, using a test cleared by the FDA for the diagnosis of acute or primary HIV-1 infection. Apretude should only be initiated on individuals with a negative infection status for HIV-1 PrEP. Individuals who become infected with HIV-1 while on treatment with Apretude must transition to a complete HIV-1 treatment regimen (1).

Apretude is contraindicated in patients that are HIV-1 infection status positive. Apretude is also contraindicated in coadministration with drugs that can decrease cabotegravir plasma concentrations significantly. Cabotegravir is primarily metabolized by UGT1A1 and drugs that induce UGT1A1 are contraindicated due to the expectation that they may decrease Apretude concentration (1).

Hypersensitivity reactions have been reported in association with other integrase inhibitors. Apretude should be discontinued immediately if signs or symptoms of hypersensitivity reactions develop (1).

Hepatotoxicity has been reported in patients receiving cabotegravir with or without known pre-existing hepatic disease or identifiable risk factors. Patients should have their liver function monitored and treatment with Apretude should be discontinued if hepatotoxicity is suspected (1).

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The healthcare provider and individual may decide to use an oral lead-in with oral cabotegravir prior to the initiation of Apretude to assess the tolerability of cabotegravir, or the healthcare provider and individual may proceed directly to injection of Apretude without the use of an oral lead-in. While no safety and efficacy data are available without an oral lead-in, clinical trials demonstrate that effective serum levels of cabotegravir are achieved without an oral lead-in (1).

Healthcare providers should carefully select individuals who agree to the required injection dosing and testing schedule and counsel individuals about the importance of adherence to scheduled dosing visits to help reduce the risk of acquiring HIV-1 infection and development of resistance (1).

Apretude must be administered by a healthcare provider by gluteal intramuscular injection (1).

The safety and effectiveness of Apretude in patients less than 12 years of age or weighing less than 35 kg have not been established (1).

Summary

Apretude is a long-acting injectable medication containing cabotegravir, indicated for the prevention of HIV-1 infection in at-risk adult and adolescent patients weighing 35 kg or more. Patients must be confirmed HIV-1 negative infection status before initiation of Apretude and at each subsequent injection. Apretude can cause hepatotoxicity and hypersensitivity reactions. Individuals to receive Apretude should be carefully selected and advised of the adherence requirements and injection schedule to reduce the risk of infection with HIV-1. The safety and effectiveness of Apretude in patients less than 12 years of age or weighing less than 35 kg have not been established (1).

Prior approval is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate, and cost-effective use of Apretude while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

References

1. Apretude [package insert]. Research Triangle Park, NC: ViiV Healthcare; September 2024.