BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

BUTALBITAL ANALGESICS

Allzital (butalbital-acetaminophen), butalbital-aspirin-caffeine, butalbital-aspirin-caffeine-codeine, butalbital-acetaminophen, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine-codeine, Vanatol LQ (butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine liquid oral solution)

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Butalbital containing products are non-opioid analgesics that contain a combination of different drug products indicated for the relief of the symptom complex of tension (or muscle contraction) headache pain. Butalbital is a short to intermediate-acting barbiturate that works in concert with acetaminophen, an antipyretic non-salicylate agent, aspirin, a pain-relieving NSAID, and caffeine, a stimulant that works in the CNS, to decrease pain via a mechanism that isn't well understood. Butalbital is a habit-forming drug that potentiates the effects of other commonly abuse drugs or substances like alcohol. Caffeine might help increase vasodilation and smooth muscle relaxation, while butalbital is thought to help balance the CNS stimulation caused by caffeine and produces depressant effects (1).

The following two statements apply only to butalbital products <u>containing codeine</u>:
Maximum daily limit of any combination of opioid medications without a PA is 90 MME/day.
Maximum daily limit of any combination of opioid medications with a PA is 200 MME/day.

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indication: Butalbital containing products are used in the relief of the symptom complex of tension or muscle contraction headaches (2-8).

Frequent use of acute medications is generally thought to cause medication-overuse headache. To decrease the risk of medication-overuse headache ("rebound headache" or "drug-induced headache") many experts limit acute therapy to two headache days per week on a regular basis. Based on concerns of overuse, medication-overuse headache, and withdrawal, the use of butalbital-containing analgesics should be limited and carefully monitored. The Allzital limit is set to the maximum of 12 doses per day for acute treatment of 8 headaches per month as this product contains less butalbital than other products. The quantity limit for all other butalbital products is set to the maximum of 6 doses per day for acute treatment of 8 headaches per month (7).

BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

BUTALBITAL ANALGESICS

Allzital (butalbital-acetaminophen), butalbital-aspirin-caffeine, butalbital-aspirin-caffeine-codeine, butalbital-acetaminophen, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine-codeine, Vanatol LQ (butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine liquid oral solution)

Acetaminophen has been associated with cases of acute liver failure, at times resulting in liver transplant. Most of the cases of liver injury are associated with the use of acetaminophen at doses that exceed 4000 milligrams per day, and often involve more than one acetaminophen-containing product. Instruct patients to look for acetaminophen or APAP on package labels and not to use more than one product that contains acetaminophen. (5-6).

The FDA has determined that a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) is necessary for all opioid analgesics intended for outpatient use to ensure that the benefits of these drugs continue to outweigh the risks. The Opioid Analgesic REMS is a strategy to reduce the risk of abuse, misuse, addiction, overdose, and deaths due to prescription opioid analgesics. Prescribers should counsel patients and caregivers about the use of naloxone for opioid overdose (9).

The safety and effectiveness of Allzital, butalbital-acetaminophen, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine, and Vanatol LQ in patients less than 12 years of age have not been established. The safety and effectiveness of butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine-codeine, butalbital-aspirin-caffeine, and butalbital-aspirin-caffeine-codeine in patients less than 18 years of age have not been established (2-8)

Summary

Butalbital is a short to intermediate-acting barbiturate that causes CNS depression. Caffeine is a CNS stimulant that is thought to help increase vasodilation (smooth muscle relaxation). Acetaminophen might help decrease pain sensation in the peripheral nervous system by blocking those signals. Aspirin is an NSAID that decreases pain and swelling by blocking prostaglandins. Butalbital-containing analgesics are FDA approved for the treatment of the symptom complex of tension or muscle contraction headache. These products can have pronounced sedative effects and butalbital is habit-forming (1-8).

Prior authorization is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate, and cost-effective use of butalbital-containing analgesics, while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

BUTALBITAL ANALGESICS

Allzital (butalbital-acetaminophen), butalbital-aspirin-caffeine, butalbital-aspirin-caffeine-codeine, butalbital-acetaminophen, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine, butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine-codeine, Vanatol LQ (butalbital-acetaminophen-caffeine liquid oral solution)

References

1. Bryczkowski, C., Geib, A.J. Combined Butalbital/Acetaminophen/Caffeine Overdose: Case Files of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Toxicology Service. Journal of Medical Toxicology, Sept. 26, 2012.
2. Vanatol LQ [package insert]. Arlington, TX GM Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; November 2019.
3. Fiorinal [package insert]. Madison, NJ: Allergan USA, Inc.; April 2021.
4. Fiorinal with Codeine [package insert]. Madison, NJ: Allergan USA, Inc.; April 2021.
5. Fioricet [package insert]. Parsippany, NJ: Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.; January 2021.
6. Fioricet with Codeine [package insert]. Parsippany, NJ: Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.; March 2021.
7. Allzital [package insert]. Canton, MS: Larken Laboratories, Inc.; June 2022.
8. Beithon J, Gallenberg M, Johnson K, et al. Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement. Diagnosis and Treatment of Headache. https://www.icsi.org/guidelines__more/catalog_guidelines_and_more/catalog_guidelines/catalog_neurological_guidelines/headache. Updated January 2013.
9. Opioid Analgesic Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS). Drug Safety and Availability: U.S. Food & Drug Administration. September 19, 2018.