

COMBIART

Artemether/Lumefantrine Tablets

20/120mg

Each uncoated tablet contains:

Artemether 20mg, Lumefantrine 120mg
Excipients:
Microcrystalline Cellulose BP/Ph/Eur
Hypromellose 2910 USP
Crosscarmellose Sodium AC-DI-SOL, FMC) BP/Ph/Eur/USNF
Polyethylene Glycol USNF
Purified Water BP/Ph/Eur/USNF
Magnesium Stearate (Vegetable) (Ferro) USNF/Ph/Eur
Isopropyl Alcohol BP/Ph/Eur

DESCRIPTION

Artemether is a derivative from artemisinin, a sesquiterpene lactone isolated from the plant *Artemesia annua*. Lumefantrine is a synthetic racemic fluorine mixture.

CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY

The pharmacodynamic effect contains fixed ratio of 1:6 parts of artemether and lumefantrine, respectively. The site of antiparasitic action of both components is the food vacuole of the malarial parasite, where they are thought to interfere with the conversion of haem, a toxic intermediate produced during haemoglobin breakdown, to the nontoxic haemozoin, malaria pigment. Lumefantrine is thought to interfere with the biosynthesis of haem by inhibiting the general reductive metabolites as a result of the interaction between its parasite bridge and haem iron. Both artemether and lumefantrine have a secondary action involving inhibition of nucleic acid and protein synthesis within the malarial parasite.

The anti-malarial activity of the combination of artemether and lumefantrine is greater than that of either substance alone. In a double-blind comparative study in China ($n=157$), the 28-day cure rate of Artemether and lumefantrine when given at doses of 20 mg and 120 mg, respectively, was 96.7% and 49% for artemether based on intention-to-treat (ITT) population, when given as monotherapy. For the evaluable population, 28-day cure rates were 100% for Artemether and lumefantrine, compared with 92% for lumefantrine and 55% for artemether when given as monotherapy.

In areas where multi-drug-resistant strains of *P. falciparum* malaria are common and in the resident population, 28-day cure rates with the 6-dose regimen (given over 60-96 h) were 81% and 90% for Artemether and lumefantrine versus 86% and 74% for artemether/atsunates, based on the ITT population. For the evaluable population, 28-day cure rates were 97% and 95% for Artemether and lumefantrine and 100% for mefloquine/atsunates.

In an open study ($n=165$) in adults the 28-day cure rate for Artemether and lumefantrine given as the 6-dose regimen was 96% (119/124) for the evaluable and 74.1% (120/162) for the ITT population. The main difference between the evaluable and ITT cure rates was owing to 38 patients who were excluded from the evaluable population for the following reasons: 33 patients had not been followed up, 10 of whom were not evaluated at Day 7 and 14 of whom had had a parasitic clearance at Day 7, but their efficacy status at Day 28 was unknown; and 5 patients took concomitant medications that were not permitted by the protocol. All these patients were considered as treatment failures in the ITT analysis.

Patients of European origin were not included in the trial with 6-dose regimen. However the safety and efficacy of the 4 dose regimen were similar in European and Thai patients, similar safety and efficacy would be expected for the 6-dose regimen in both populations.

In 39 patients in whom gametocytes were present, the median time to gameteocyte clearance was 56h. The Artemether and lumefantrine was associated with more rapid gameteocyte clearance than any comparator other than mefloquine/atsunates.

Artemether and lumefantrine is active against blood stages of *Plasmodium vivax*, but is not active against hypnozoites. Therefore, sequential treatment with primaquine may be used to achieve hypnozoite eradication.

PHARMACOKINETICS:

Pharmacokinetic studies of the combination of Artemether and lumefantrine are limited by the lack of an intravenous formulation, and the very high inter-and intra-subject variability of artemether and lumefantrine plasma concentrations and derived pharmacokinetic parameters (AUC, C_{max}).

Absorption: Artemether is absorbed fairly rapidly with peak plasma concentrations reached about 2 hours after dosing. Absorption of lumefantrine, a highly lipophilic compound, starts after a 6-8 hours after dosing. Food enhances the absorption of both artemether and lumefantrine in healthy volunteers the relative bioavailability of artemether was increased more than two-fold and that of lumefantrine sixteen-fold compared with fasted conditions when artemether and lumefantrine was taken after a high-fat meal.

Food effect: Food increases the absorption of lumefantrine in patients with a diet enough to a lesser extent (approximately two-fold) most probably due to the lower fat content of the food ingested by acutely ill patients. The food interaction data indicate that absorption of lumefantrine under fasted conditions is very poor (assuming 100% absorption after a high-fat meal, the amount absorbed under fasted conditions would be <10% of the dose). Patients should therefore be encouraged to take the medication with a normal diet as soon as food can be taken.

Distribution: Artemether and lumefantrine are both highly bound to human serum proteins in vitro (95.4% and 99.7%, respectively). Dihydroartemisinin is also bound to human serum proteins (47.7%), protein binding to human plasma protein is linear.

Metabolism: Artemether is rapidly and extensively metabolized (substantial first-pass metabolism both in vivo and in humans). Human liver microsomes metabolism artemether to the biologically active main metabolite dihydroartemisinin (dihydroartemisinin), predominantly through the iso-enzyme CYP3A45. This metabolite has also been detected in humans in vivo. The artemether/dihydroartemisinin AUC ratio is 1.2 after a single dose and 0.3 after 6 doses given over 3 days. In vivo data indicate that artemisins have some capacity to induce cytochrome iso-enzymes CYP2C19 and CYP3A44. Dihydroartemisinin is metabolized mainly by CYP2D6, mainly by CYP3A44, in human liver microsomes. In vivo in animals (dogs and rats), glucuronidation of lumefantrine takes place directly and after oxidative biotransformation. In humans, the systemic exposure to the metabolite desbutyl-lumefantrine, for which the in vitro antiparasitic effect is 5 to 8 fold higher than lumefantrine, was less than 1% of the exposure to the parent drug. Desbutyl-lumefantrine is not available specifically for an African population. In vitro, lumefantrine significantly inhibits the activity of CYP2D6 at therapeutic plasma concentrations.

Elimination: Artemether and dihydroartemisinin are rapidly cleared from plasma with an elimination half-life of about 2 hours. Lumefantrine is eliminated very slowly with a terminal half-life of 2-3 days in healthy volunteers and 4-6 days in patients with fever. Lumefantrine is excreted via the bile in the pharmacokinetics of Artemether and lumefantrine. No urinary excretion data are available for humans. In rats and dogs unchanged artemether has not been detected in faeces and urine due to its rapid and high-first-pass metabolism, but several metabolites (unidentified) have been detected in both faeces and urine. Lumefantrine is eliminated via the bile in the pharmacokinetics of Artemether and lumefantrine. No urinary excretion data are available for humans. In rats and dogs unchanged artemether has not been detected in faeces and urine due to its rapid and high-first-pass metabolism, but several metabolites (unidentified) have been detected in both faeces and urine. 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