

Perindopril arginine

The NHS England guidance on items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care lists products that are regarded as low priority for funding, poor value for money or for which there are safer alternatives (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs/>). Perindopril arginine (Coversyl®) features on the list as an item that is poor value for money, as although it is clinically effective, more cost-effective products are available.

Key recommendations

- Perindopril arginine (Coversyl® arginine) has no clinical benefit over the generic perindopril erbumine salt and is more costly. In view of the difference in cost between perindopril arginine and generic perindopril erbumine the preferred choice is generic perindopril erbumine.
- Commence new patients requiring perindopril on generic perindopril erbumine.
- Review all patients prescribed perindopril arginine or any branded Coversyl® products for suitability for switching to generic perindopril erbumine.
- Switch all suitable patients to generic perindopril erbumine. As with all switches, these should be tailored to the individual patient.

Supporting information

The arginine salt version of perindopril was developed as it is more stable in extremes of the Australian climate than the erbumine salt, which results in a longer shelf-life of three years as opposed to two years.^{1,2} However in the context of the UK climate and supply chain this benefit is not significant and there is no robust evidence to suggest a clinically significant benefit of perindopril arginine over perindopril erbumine. Consequently, perindopril arginine (including the combination product and all branded Coversyl® preparations) are not recommended for routine prescribing on the NHS.

The manufacturer (Servier) discontinued their original brand Coversyl® when they launched Coversyl® Arginine.³ Consequently, any branded prescriptions written as Coversyl® (or the combination product Coversyl® Plus) would also mean the more expensive branded product Coversyl® Arginine is dispensed.

Switching to perindopril erbumine

In England and Wales, almost £790,000 is currently spent on perindopril arginine preparations in the course of a year (ePACT July to Sept 2020). Switching to the equivalent dose of perindopril erbumine (plus separate indapamide for patients taking the combination product or the perindopril erbumine/amlodipine combination product) has the potential to **release savings of approximately £359,000 annually**. This equates to £584 per 100,000 patients. Tables 1 and 2 show the cost of the products and recommended switch regimens.

Table 1: Cost of products

Drug	Cost per 30 tablets (£)
Perindopril erbumine 2mg tablets	£2.85
Perindopril erbumine 4mg tablets	£4.49
Perindopril erbumine 8mg tablets	£5.25
Perindopril arginine 2.5mg tablets	£4.43
Perindopril arginine 5mg tablets	£6.28
Perindopril arginine 10mg tablets	£10.65

Table 2: Recommended dose equivalence⁴

Current treatment	Switch to*
Coversyl® Arginine 2.5mg once daily	Perindopril erbumine 2mg once daily
Coversyl® Arginine 5mg once daily	Perindopril erbumine 4mg once daily
Coversyl® Arginine 10mg once daily	Perindopril erbumine 8mg once daily




*All switches should be tailored to the individual patient.

Clinicians may wish to choose other options according to the individual clinical need of the patient. This could include a trial of discontinuing treatment gradually, if antihypertensive medication is no longer needed. Follow-up the patient carefully (e.g. at about 4-week intervals for 6 months, then 2 or 3 times a year) to detect any recurrence of hypertension.⁵

For patients receiving Coversyl® Arginine Plus, the combination product of perindopril 5mg and indapamide 1.25mg, there is no direct switch. However prescribing perindopril erbumine 4mg plus an appropriate diuretic as a separate component is the best option.

References

1. Kubler P. Editorial: New Drugs for Old. Aust Prescr 2006; 29: 148-9.
2. Telejko E. Perindopril arginine: benefits of a new salt of the ACE inhibitor perindopril. Curr Med Res Opin 2007; 23 (5): 953-60.
3. Summary of Product Characteristics. Coversyl arginine plus 2.5mg film-coated tablets. Last updated on February 2019. Servier Laboratories Limited. Available at <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/6224/smpc>
4. Potential for confusion with new formulation of Coversyl®. 18th April 2008. NPC Rapid Review.
5. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries (CKS). Last updated September 2020. Hypertension in patients without diabetes. Available at <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/hypertension-not-diabetic/management/management/>

Additional resources available	 Bulletin	https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/bulletins/bulletin-209-perindopril-arginine/
	 Tools	
	 Data pack	https://data.prescqipp.info/#/views/B209_Perindoprilarginine/FrontPage?:iid=1

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