Industry update

With so many ongoing advances in the management of diabetes, this section keeps you up to date with product-related developments and other relevant news

FDA approves inhalable insulin Afrezza

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Afrezza® (insulin human) Inhalation Powder, a rapid-acting inhaled insulin to improve glycaemic control in adults with type 1 diabetes designed to be administered at the beginning of each meal.

Afrezza must be used in combination with long-acting insulin and is not recommended for the treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis, or in people who smoke. Afrezza also has a Boxed Warning advising that acute bronchospasm has been observed in people with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and it should not be used in people with chronic lung disease or complications.

The announcement in June also states that the FDA has required further post-marketing studies on the safety and efficacy of the agent.

Canagliflozin guidance published by NICE

NICE has published final guidance on the use of Invokana® (canagliflozin) in the UK for the treatment of type 2 diabetes. Canagliflozin is a sodium–glucose co-transporter 2 manufactured by Janssen. It can be used as an add-on therapy to metformin if the person in question cannot take a sulphonylurea or is at significant risk of hypoglycaemia or its consequences.

If a person needs to take three antidiabetic drugs, canagliflozin is recommended as a possible treatment when taken with either metformin and a sulphonylurea, or metformin and a thiazolidinedione. Canagliflozin can also be taken with insulin, with or without other antidiabetes drugs.

Canagliflozin is expected to be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance, which should be in September 2014.

New blood glucose monitoring system to improve patient motivation

LifeScan have launched the OneTouch® Verio® Blood Glucose Monitoring System in response to research demonstrating that up to one-third of people with diabetes find it difficult to make sense of their blood glucose results.

The device is designed to make results easy to understand, and uses a colour-coded range indicator to show whether a test result is within, below or above the healthy range, as well as progress notes to let patients know when they consistently achieve the correct range or have got back in range. After using the meter for 1 week, 94% of patients said it made their test results simple to understand.

The meter uses OneTouch Verio Test Strips, which provide results in 5 seconds and require only 0.4 µL of blood for an accurate reading.

The device is available free of charge to healthcare professionals from www.lifescan.co.uk.

LifeScan's OneTouch® Verio® meter

FDA approves steroid implant for DMO

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved an intravitreal steroid implant for use in people with diabetic macular oedema (DMO) who are pseudophakic or about to undergo cataract surgery.

Ozurdex®, Allergan's sustained-release dexamethasone implant, was approved in June following publication of two multicentre, 3-year trials. It is already indicated for the treatment of macular oedema following branch retinal vein occlusion and central retinal vein occlusion, and for non-infectious uveitis.

Ozurdex is contraindicated in people with advanced glaucoma, a non-intact posterior lens capsule, or other infections or diseases of the eye.

The implant also received a positive opinion from the European Medicines Agency for use in people with DMO who are pseudophakic or considered to be insufficiently responsive to or unsuitable for non-corticosteroid therapy.

Jardiance approved in US on second attempt

Jardiance® (empagliflozin), a sodium–glucose co-transporter 2, has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after the drug's maker, Boehringer Ingelheim (BI), corrected manufacturing problems that caused the agency to reject it in March. The agent is indicated for improving glycaemic control in adults with type 2 diabetes, alone or in conjunction with other drugs for the condition.

The agent should not be used to treat people with type 1 diabetes, those with diabetic ketoacidosis, or those with severe renal impairment.

Following the European Medicines Agency's approval in May, the FDA approval paves the way for BI and its partner, Eli Lilly, to close in on the lead for the diabetes market, as the companies will soon be marketing drugs from every antidiabetes class.