

TYPE: Drug Recall

Weight-Loss Drug Withdrawn From Market Over Safety Concerns

Drug Name: **lorcaserin (Belviq, Belvig XR)**

Audience: Patient, Pharmacy

Date: **02/19/20**



ISSUE

Manufacturer Eisai is voluntarily recalling all lorcaserin (Belviq, Belvig XR) drugs due to a trial suggesting increased cancer risk.

The review of the full clinical trial results shows that the potential risk of cancer associated with the drug outweighs the benefit of treatment.

Data leading to the voluntary recall came from the CAMELLIA-TIMI-61 trial, and follows last month's safety alert from the FDA of the potential cancer link. Analysis of the study showed a numerically higher cancer incidence over the course of the trial in the lorcaserin arm, at 7.7% versus 7.1% in the placebo arm.

Increases in specific cancers, including pancreatic, colorectal, and lung contributed to the observed overall increase.

BACKGROUND

From 1999 to 2012, the FDA blocked all weight-loss drugs from gaining approval. In 2012, lorcaserin, a serotonin receptor 2C agonist, became the first FDA-approved drug for weight loss in over a decade.

RECOMMENDATION

The FDA said physicians should cease prescribing lorcaserin and contact patients taking the drug to "inform them of the increased occurrence of cancer seen in the clinical trial, and ask them to stop taking the medicine."

No special cancer screening should be recommended to patients on the drug other than standard age and risk-based recommendations.

A potential alternative to lorcaserin could be Contrave, a preferred formulary option which patients are encouraged to discuss with their doctor.