

PRESS RELEASE

Myeloma Euronet welcomes European approval of Thalidomide Pharmion

Berlin, 23 April 2008 – Myeloma Euronet, the European Network of Myeloma Patient Groups, welcomes the decision of the European Commission to grant a marketing authorisation for Thalidomide Pharmion® in combination with Melphalan and Prednisolone as initial treatment for myeloma patients aged 65 or older and not suitable for high-dose chemotherapy and stem cell transplantation.

The approval was based on data from studies involving nearly 1400 patients in total, including the Intergroupe Francophone du Myélome (IFM) 99-06 survival study. Results from this study showed a survival advantage of over 18 months when Thalidomide Pharmion was added to Melphalan and Prednisolone (MPT) in patients aged between 65 and 75.

“We are delighted that thalidomide has now finally become a licensed treatment option for myeloma patients in Europe and has no longer to be obtained via the “black market”,” says Anita Waldmann, President of Myeloma Euronet. “Many parties, including physicians, regulatory agencies, the company, myeloma patient groups and thalidomide groups across Europe have worked together to make this happen and we are especially grateful to the many thalidomide victims’ organisations who have come to accept that thalidomide—if administered correctly—can help many people who suffer from myeloma.”

It is known since 1961 that the drug thalidomide is associated with teratogenic risk, i.e. treatment with thalidomide can cause severe birth defects in children. Today, thalidomide is an important treatment option for many patients suffering from multiple myeloma. Thalidomide Pharmion is prescribed and dispensed according to a special risk minimisation programme.

Myeloma Euronet is a registered non-profit organisation of multiple myeloma patient groups dedicated to raising the awareness of multiple myeloma, an increasingly common, yet still incurable form of bone marrow cancer, affecting around 80,000 people in Europe at any one time. Myeloma Euronet also provides information on myeloma diagnosis, treatment and care and advocates the cause of myeloma at the European level.

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