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ASTRAZENECA LAUNCHES NEW TREATMENT FOR MIGRAINE, 'ZOMIG', IN CHINA

AstraZeneca has taken an important step in developing further its business in China by launching 'Zomig', a new oral treatment for acute migraine.

Trial programmes and clinical experience with 'Zomig' have demonstrated rapid, reliable and long-lasting relief of symptoms with good tolerability. These features, together with a simple oral dosing regimen, mean that 'Zomig' represents a major opportunity for AstraZeneca, as there are significant unmet needs for both patient and physician in the management of migraine. The worldwide market for migraine treatment is growing rapidly and is expected to reach over \$2 billion by next year.

'Zomig' is a novel, dual action 5HT_{1B/1D} receptor agonist which has demonstrated both peripheral and central activity in the brain during pre-clinical studies. In addition to the peripheral action of constricting cerebral blood vessels, 'Zomig' acts centrally at the trigeminal nucleus, within the brain stem, which is thought to be the location of the 'pain generator'.

Following its first launch in U.K. in 1997, 'Zomig' has been approved in over 60 countries throughout the world and is now available in 45. Worldwide sales for 'Zomig' in 1998 were \$98 million.

Pre-launch clinical verification of 'Zomig' in China was conducted in Peking Union Hospital, Affiliated Hospital to Beijing Medical University, Shanghai Huashan Hospital and Shanghai Ruijin Hospital. Prof. Kuang Peigen, President of China Headache and Facial Pain Association, commented at a recent neurophysician symposium: "A 5-HT_{1B/1D} agonist is perhaps the first choice and the most advanced treatment for acute migraine in China. 'Zomig' represents the latest generation of 5-HT_{1B/1D} agonist in China and will provide a new choice for Chinese migraine sufferers."

Efficacy is significant within one hour of dosing with 'Zomig', with some patients experiencing relief within 30 minutes, and one tablet provides relief up to 24 hours in the majority of responders.

Migraine is a common disorder worldwide and estimates suggest that ten to 15 per cent of the population in developed countries are affected at some time during their lives. The prevalence of migraine reaches a peak during sufferers' most productive years, between the ages of 25 and 55 and the condition often causes disability, adversely affecting quality of life.

AstraZeneca's pharmaceuticals business has a long established reputation in the research and development of major innovative drugs acting on the Central Nervous System (CNS). The portfolio of CNS products developed by AstraZeneca includes treatments for the management of insomnia, epilepsy, anaesthesia, anxiety, depression and schizophrenia.