ASTRA

NEWS RELEASE

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FDA APPROVES NEW ANTIHYPERTENSIVE AGENT FROM ASTRA

On June 4, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Atacand® (candesartan cilexetil), a highly effective antihypertensive drug with excellent tolerability to be marketed in the U.S. by Astra Merck, Inc.

Atacand belongs to an important new class of antihypertensive drugs, the angiotensin II type 1 receptor blockers, which are expected to become a leading class of antihypertensive agents in the next decade.

Clinical trials involving more than 7,000 patients have demonstrated that Atacand is a highly effective drug with clear dose response relationship, long duration of effect and an excellent tolerability, similar to placebo at all dose levels studied.

Atacand, which was licensed from the Japanese company Takeda Chemical Industries Ltd., has been jointly developed by Astra and Takeda, and in the U.S. also in collaboration with Astra Merck. It will be marketed exclusively in the U.S. by Astra Merck. Similarly, Astra has exclusive marketing rights in some European countries and for example in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Takeda has exclusive rights in Japan and most of Asia. In major European countries and all other markets the product is being co-marketed by the two companies.

Atacand has already been introduced in a number of European markets, including Germany, Sweden and the U.K.

Astra Merck is owned in equal parts (50/50) by Astra and the U.S. pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc. Half of Astra Merck's sales are included in the Astra Group's sales.

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