

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Tablets

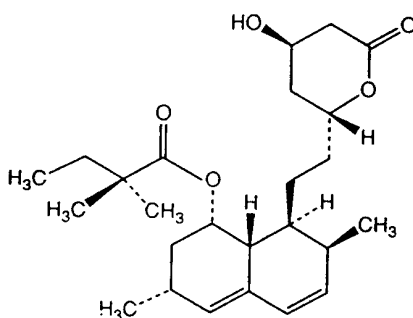
LIPEX®
(simvastatin, MSD)

LIPEX (simvastatin, MSD) is a lipid-lowering agent derived synthetically from a fermentation product of Aspergillus terreus.

NAME OF THE MEDICINE

Simvastatin is described chemically as [1S-[1 α , 3 α , 7 β , 8 β (2S*,4S*),8a β]]-1,2,3,7,8,8a-hexahydro-3,7-dimethyl-8-[2-(tetrahydro-4-hydroxy-6-oxo-2H-pyran-2-yl)ethyl]-1-naphthalenyl 2,2-dimethylbutanoate.

Its empirical formula is C₂₅ H₃₈ O₅ and its molecular weight is 418.57. Its structural formula is:



Simvastatin chemical abstract number is - CAS-79902-63-9

DESCRIPTION

Simvastatin is a white crystalline powder, practically insoluble in water and freely soluble in chloroform, methanol and ethanol.

Each tablet for oral administration contains either 10 mg, 20 mg, 40 mg or 80 mg of simvastatin and the following non-medicinal ingredients: butylated hydroxyanisole, ascorbic acid, citric acid monohydrate, cellulose microcrystalline, starch maize pregelatinised, magnesium stearate, lactose, hypromellose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, titanium dioxide, talc. Each tablet may also contain one or both of the following: yellow iron oxide CI77492 and red iron oxide CI77491.

PHARMACOLOGY

Clinical Pharmacology

The involvement of low-density lipoprotein-cholesterol (LDL-C) in atherogenesis has been well documented in clinical and pathological studies, as well as in many animal experiments. Epidemiological studies have established that high LDL-C and low high-density lipoprotein-cholesterol (HDL-C) are both risk factors for coronary heart disease (CHD).

After oral ingestion, LIPEX, which is an inactive lactone, is hydrolysed to the corresponding β -hydroxyacid form. This is a principal metabolite and an inhibitor of 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-coenzyme A (HMG-CoA) reductase, an enzyme which catalyses an early and rate-limiting step in the biosynthesis of cholesterol. As a result, in clinical studies LIPEX reduced total plasma cholesterol (total-C), LDL-C and very low-density lipoprotein-cholesterol (VLDL-C) concentrations. In addition, LIPEX increases HDL-C and reduces plasma triglycerides (TG).

LIPEX has been shown to reduce both normal and elevated LDL-C concentrations. LDL is formed from VLDL and is catabolised predominantly by the high affinity LDL receptor. The mechanism of the LDL-lowering effect of LIPEX may involve both reduction of VLDL-C concentration and induction of the LDL receptor, leading to reduced production and increased catabolism of LDL-C. Apolipoprotein B (Apo B) also falls substantially during treatment with LIPEX. Since each LDL particle contains one molecule of Apo B, and since little Apo B is found in other lipoproteins, this strongly suggests that LIPEX does not merely cause cholesterol to be lost from LDL, but also reduces the concentration of circulating LDL particles. As a result of these changes the ratios of total-C to HDL-C and LDL-C to HDL-C are reduced.

Even though LIPEX is a specific inhibitor of HMG-CoA reductase, the enzyme which catalyses the conversion of HMG-CoA to mevalonate is not completely blocked at therapeutic doses, therefore it allows the necessary amounts of mevalonate to be available for biological functions. Because the conversion of HMG-CoA to mevalonate is an early step in the biosynthetic pathway of cholesterol, therapy with LIPEX would not be expected to cause an accumulation of potentially toxic sterols. In addition, HMG-CoA is metabolised readily back to acetyl-CoA, which participates in many biosynthetic processes in the body.

Pharmacokinetics

The inhibition of HMG-CoA reductase is the basis for an assay in pharmacokinetic studies of the β -hydroxyacid metabolites (active inhibitors) and, following base hydrolysis, active plus latent inhibitors (total inhibitors). Both are measured in plasma following administration of simvastatin.

Absorption & Excretion:

In a disposition study with ^{14}C -labelled simvastatin, 100mg (20 μCi) of drug was administered as capsules (5 x 20mg), and blood, urine, and faeces collected. Thirteen percent of the radioactivity was recovered in the urine and 60 percent in faeces. The latter represents absorbed drug equivalents excreted in bile as well as unabsorbed drug. Less than 0.5 percent of the dose was recovered in urine as HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. In plasma, the inhibitors account for 14 percent and 28 percent (active and total inhibitors) of

the AUC of total radioactivity, indicating that the majority of chemical species present were inactive or weak inhibitors.

Both simvastatin and β -hydroxyacid are bound to human plasma proteins (95%). The availability of β -hydroxyacid to the systemic circulation following an oral dose of simvastatin was estimated using an I.V. reference dose of β -hydroxyacid; the value was found to be less than 5 percent of the dose.

By analogy to a dog model, simvastatin is well absorbed and undergoes extensive first-pass extraction in the liver, the primary site of action, with subsequent excretion of drug equivalents in the bile. Consequently, availability of active drug to the general circulation is low.

Metabolism:

The major metabolites of simvastatin present in human plasma are β -hydroxyacid and four additional active metabolites. Simvastatin and other HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are metabolised by CYP 3A4 (see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**). In dose-proportionality studies utilising doses of simvastatin of 5, 10, 20, 60, 90 and 120mg there was no substantial deviation from linearity of AUC of inhibitors in the general circulation with an increase in dose. Relative to the fasting state, the plasma profile of inhibitors was not affected when simvastatin was administered immediately before a test meal.

The pharmacokinetics of single and multiple doses of simvastatin showed that no accumulation of drug occurred after multiple dosing. In all of the above pharmacokinetic studies, the maximum plasma concentration of inhibitors occurred 1.3 to 2.4 hours post dose.

Although the mechanism is not fully understood, cyclosporin has been shown to increase the AUC of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. The increase in AUC for simvastatin acid is presumably due, in part, to inhibition of CYP3A4.

The pharmacokinetic effects of calcium channel blockers on simvastatin and HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are summarised in Table 1. The data show increases in simvastatin acid exposure (AUC) with calcium channel blockers (see **PRECAUTIONS/Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**).

Table 1
Effect of Coadministered Calcium Channel Blockers on Simvastatin Systemic Exposure and HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitory Activity

Coadministered drug and dosing regimen	Dosing of Simvastatin	Geometric mean ratio (Ratio* with / without coadministered drug) No Effect = 1.00	AUC	C _{max}
Verapamil SR 240 mg QD Days 1-7 then 240 mg BID on Days 8-10	80 mg on Day 10	Simvastatin acid [†]	2.3	2.4
		Simvastatin	2.5	2.1
		Active inhibitors	1.8	1.3
		Total inhibitors	1.8	1.4
Diltiazem 120 mg BID for 10 Days	80 mg on Day 10	Simvastatin acid [†]	2.7	2.7
		Simvastatin	3.1	2.9
		Active inhibitors	2.0	1.6
		Total inhibitors	1.7	1.5
Amlodipine 10 mg QD x 10 Days	80 mg on Day 10	Simvastatin acid [†]	1.6	1.6
		Simvastatin	1.8	1.5
		Active inhibitors	1.3	0.9
		Total inhibitors	1.3	1.0

* Results based on a chemical assay

[†] Simvastatin acid refers to the β-hydroxyacid of simvastatin

A single dose of 2 g niacin extended-release co administered with 20 mg simvastatin increased the AUC and C_{max} of simvastatin acid by approximately 60% and 84%, respectively, compared to administration of 20 mg simvastatin alone. In this study, the effect of simvastatin on niacin pharmacokinetics was not measured.

The risk of myopathy is increased by high levels of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity in plasma. Potent inhibitors of CYP3A4 can raise the plasma levels of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity and increase the risk of myopathy (see **PRECAUTIONS/Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis** and **DRUG INTERACTIONS**).

CLINICAL TRIALS

LIPEX has been studied in the treatment of primary hypercholesterolaemia where diet alone has been insufficient. LIPEX was highly effective in reducing total-C and LDL-C in heterozygous familial (Fredrickson type IIa) and non-familial forms of hypercholesterolaemia, and in mixed hyperlipidaemia (Fredrickson type IIb) when elevated cholesterol was a cause of concern. A marked response was seen within 2 weeks, and the maximum therapeutic response occurred within 4-6 weeks. The response has been maintained during continuation of therapy. In six controlled clinical studies involving approximately 1700 patients with normal or slightly raised TG (mean 1.9 mmol/L), plasma TG, VLDL-C and Apo B decreased in all studies in a dose-dependent manner. In two of these studies in patients

with hypercholesterolaemia receiving LIPEX 20 or 40 mg/day for 12 weeks, the following results were observed.

Table 2
Effect of Simvastatin in Patients with Hypercholesterolaemia

	Mean Baseline	Mean Percent Change	
		20 mg once daily (n=166)	40 mg once daily (n=161)
Total Cholesterol	8.3 mmol/L	-27: -27	-30: -33
LDL-Cholesterol	6.4 mmol/L	-32: -34	-40: -41
HDL-Cholesterol	1.2 mmol/L	+10: +10	+10: +13
Triglycerides	1.9 mmol/L	-13: -17	-19: -27
VLDL-Cholesterol	0.8 mmol/L	-8 ^{†*}	-28 ^{‡*}
Apolipoprotein B	2000 mg/L	-28: -33	-36: -38

[†] (n=84) [‡] (n=81) *only measured in one study

In a separate study involving 180 patients with combined hyperlipidaemia, LIPEX 10 mg/day for 17 weeks was also shown to be effective in lowering total-C, LDL-C, VLDL-C, TGs and Apo B.

Table 3
Effect of Simvastatin in Patients with Combined Hyperlipidaemia

	Mean Baseline	Mean Percent Change
		10 mg once daily (n=56)
Total Cholesterol	7.0 mmol/L	-23
LDL-Cholesterol	4.5 mmol/L	-27
HDL-Cholesterol	1.0 mmol/L	+13
Triglycerides ¹	2.6 mmol/L	-26
VLDL-Cholesterol	1.3 mmol/L	-28
Apolipoprotein B	1710 mg/L	-21

¹median

The data from these studies demonstrate that in patients with hypercholesterolaemia and normal or slightly raised TG, LIPEX consistently reduces total-C, LDL-C, TG, VLDL-C and Apo B in a dose dependent manner. The results of 4 separate studies depicting the dose response to simvastatin in patients with primary hypercholesterolaemia are presented in Table 4:

Table 4
Dose Response in Patients with Primary Hypercholesterolaemia
 (Mean Percent Change from Baseline After 6 to 24 Weeks)

<u>TREATMENT</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>TOTAL-</u> <u>C</u>	<u>LDL-C</u>	<u>HDL-C</u>	<u>TG*</u>
<u>Lower Dose Comparative Study</u>					
Simvastatin 5 mg**	109	-19	-26	10	-12
LIPEX 10 mg**	110	-23	-30	12	-15
<u>Scandinavian Simvastatin Survival Study</u>					
Placebo	2223	-1	-1	0	-2
LIPEX 20 mg**	2221	-28	-38	8	-19
<u>Upper Dose Comparative Study</u>					
LIPEX 40 mg**	433	-31	-41	9	-18
LIPEX 80 mg**	664	-36	-47	8	-24
<u>Multicentre Combined Hyperlipidaemia Study</u>					
Placebo	122 (except LDL-C, N=121)	1	2	3	-4
LIPEX 40 mg**	122	-25	-29	13	-28
LIPEX 80 mg**	123 (except LDL-C, N=121)	-31	-36	16	-33

* Median percent change

** In the evening

In the upper dose comparative study, one third of patients obtained a reduction in LDL-C of 53% or more at the 80 mg dose. The percent reduction in LDL-C was essentially independent of the baseline level. In contrast, the percent reduction in TG was related to the baseline level of TG. Of the 664 patients randomised to 80 mg, 475 patients with plasma TG \leq 2.25 mmol/L had a median reduction in TG of 21%, while in 189 patients with hypertriglyceridaemia ($>$ 2.25 mmol/L), the median reduction in TG was 36%. In these studies, patients with TG $>$ 4.0 mmol/L were excluded.

In a controlled clinical study, 12 patients 15-39 years of age with homozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia received simvastatin 40 mg/day in a single dose or in 3 divided doses, or 80 mg/day in 3 divided doses of 20 mg, 20 mg, and an evening dose of 40 mg. The mean LDL-C reductions for the 40 mg and 80 mg doses were 14% and 25%, respectively. One of the twelve patients in this study had complete absence of LDL receptor function (receptor 'deficient'). In this patient, LDL-C reduction of 41% occurred with the 80 mg dose. The magnitude of response to therapy with simvastatin was not predictable by the LDL-receptor gene defects as patients with some LDL-receptor mutations responded differently to the same dose of simvastatin therapy. Five of the twelve patients were also receiving probucol.

The value of drug- and/or diet-induced reduction in plasma cholesterol is no longer controversial. The benefits of reducing LDL-C on morbidity and mortality due to CHD have been established. The Lipid Research Clinics Coronary Primary Prevention Trial (LRC-CPPT) demonstrated in a seven-year, double-blind, placebo-controlled study that lowering LDL-C with diet and cholestyramine decreased the combined incidence of CHD death plus non-fatal myocardial infarction (MI).

In a randomised, double-blind, 3-period crossover study, 130 patients with combined hyperlipidaemia (LDL-C $>$ 3.4 mmol/L and TG: 3.4 – 7.9 mmol/L) were treated with placebo, LIPEX 40, and 80 mg/day for 6 weeks. In a dose-dependent manner LIPEX 40 and 80 mg/day, respectively, decreased mean LDL-C by 29 and 36% (placebo: 2%) and median TG levels by 28 and 33% (placebo: 4%), and increased mean HDL-C by 13 and 16% (placebo: 3%) and apolipoprotein A-1 by 8 and 11% (placebo: 4%).

In the Scandinavian Simvastatin Survival Study (4S), LIPEX reduced the risk of death, coronary death, non-fatal MI and undergoing myocardial revascularisation procedures (coronary artery bypass grafting and percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty) in patients with CHD and hypercholesterolaemia.

In 4S the effect of therapy with LIPEX on total mortality was assessed in 4444 patients with CHD and baseline total-C 5.5-8.0 mmol/L. In this multicentre, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, patients with angina or a previous MI were treated with diet and standard care and either with LIPEX 20-40mg daily (n=2221) or placebo (n=2223) for a median duration of 5.4 years. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the subjects were male. Over the course of the study, treatment with LIPEX led to mean reductions in total-C, LDL-C, and TG of 25%, 35%, and 10% respectively, and a mean increase in HDL-C of 8%. LIPEX reduced the risk of death by 30%, 95% confidence interval 15-42%, $p=0.0003$ (182 deaths in the LIPEX group vs 256 deaths in the placebo group). The risk of CHD death was reduced by 42%, 95% CI 27-54%, $p=0.00001$ (111 vs 189). LIPEX also decreased the risk of having major coronary events (CHD death plus hospital-verified and silent non-fatal MI) by 34%, 95% CI 25-41%, $p<0.00001$ (431 patients vs 622 patients with one or more events). The risk of having a hospital-verified non-fatal MI was reduced by 37%. LIPEX reduced the risk

for undergoing myocardial revascularisation procedures (coronary artery bypass grafting or percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty) by 37%, 95% CI 26-46%, $p < 0.00001$ (252 patients vs 383 patients).

Furthermore, LIPEX significantly reduced the risk of fatal plus non-fatal cerebrovascular events (stroke and transient ischaemic attacks) by 28%, 95% CI 3-46% ($p = 0.033$, 75 patients vs 102 patients). There was no statistically significant difference between groups in non-cardiovascular mortality. LIPEX reduced the risk of major coronary events to a similar extent across the range of baseline total-C and LDL-C levels.

The risk of death in patients ≥ 60 years of age was decreased by 27% and in patients < 60 years of age by 37%, 95% CI 12-55% ($p < 0.01$ in both age groups). Because there were only 53 female deaths, the effect of LIPEX on mortality in women could not be adequately assessed. However, LIPEX lessened the risk of having major coronary events by 34%, 95% CI 9-52% ($p = 0.012$, 60 women vs 91 women with one or more event). In a post-hoc analysis in patients with diabetes mellitus and CHD, the risk of major coronary events was reduced by 55%, 95% CI 24-73% ($p = 0.002$, 24 patients vs 44 patients). Since there were only 39 deaths among diabetic patients (15 among simvastatin-treated patients and 24 among placebo treated patients), the effect of LIPEX on mortality in diabetic patients could not be adequately assessed. It should be noted that 4S excluded patients with triglycerides > 2.5 mmol/L or with severe cardiac or renal disease.

In the Multicenter Anti-Atheroma Study (MAAS), the effect of therapy with simvastatin on coronary atherosclerosis was assessed by quantitative coronary angiography in hypercholesterolaemic men and women with coronary heart disease. In this randomised, double-blind, controlled clinical trial, 404 patients with total-C values of 5.5 to 8.0 mmol/L and a mean baseline LDL-C value of 4.4 mmol/L were treated with conventional measures and with simvastatin 20 mg/d or placebo. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the subjects were male. Angiograms were evaluated at baseline, two and four years. A total of 347 patients had a baseline angiogram and at least one follow-up angiogram. In the patients who received placebo, coronary atherosclerotic lesions worsened in a near-linear manner.

In contrast, simvastatin significantly slowed the progression of lesions as measured in the final angiogram by the mean change per-patient in minimum ($p = 0.005$) and mean ($p = 0.026$) lumen diameters (co-primary endpoints, indicating focal and diffuse disease, respectively), as well as in percent diameter stenosis ($p = 0.003$). Simvastatin also significantly decreased the proportion of patients with new lesions (13% simvastatin vs 24% placebo, $p = 0.009$) and with new total occlusions (5% vs 11%, $p = 0.04$). In interpreting these results, it is important to be aware of the limitations of angiography, which may underestimate the extent and severity of atherosclerosis. In addition, angiography cannot be used to predict the site of future coronary occlusion. Acute ischaemic events tend to occur not at the site of severe stenoses but at lesser stenoses which are lipid-rich, soft and more prone to rupture.

In MAAS, LIPEX slowed the progression of coronary atherosclerosis and reduced the development of both new lesions and new total occlusions, whereas coronary atherosclerotic lesions steadily worsened over four years in patients receiving standard care.

High Risk of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) or Existing Coronary Heart Disease

The Heart Protection Study (HPS) was a large, multicenter, randomised, placebo-controlled, double-blind study with a mean duration of 5.3 years conducted in 20, 536 patients (10,269 on LIPEX 40 mg and 10,267 on placebo). Patients were 40-80 years of age and at high risk of developing a major coronary event based on 3 main categories of past medical history:

Coronary disease (definite or probable clinical diagnosis of MI, unstable angina, stable angina, PTCA or CABG); **occlusive disease of non-coronary arteries** (clinical, angiographic or ultrasound diagnosis of carotid artery stenosis (eg TIA or non-disabling stroke not thought to be haemorrhagic), carotid endarterectomy, leg artery stenosis (eg intermittent claudication) or surgery); or **diabetes mellitus** (clinical diagnosis of insulin-dependent or maturity-onset diabetes). LDL-C levels were assayed using a direct method and collected without regard for meals (results are about 5% lower than fasting sample). At baseline, 3,421 patients (17%) had LDL-C levels below 2.6 mmol/L; 7,068 patients (34%) had levels greater than 2.6 mmol/L and less than 3.4 mmol/L; and 10,047 patients (49%) had levels greater than or equal to 3.4 mmol/L. At baseline, 2030 (19.8%) patients in the simvastatin group and 2042 (19.9%) in the placebo group had total-C less than 5.0 mmol/L; 3942 (38.4%) patients in the simvastatin group and 3941 (38.4%) in the placebo group had levels greater than or equal to 5.0 mmol/L and less than 6.0 mmol/L; and 4297 (41.8%) patients in the simvastatin group and 4284 (41.7%) in the placebo group had levels greater than or equal to 6.0 mmol/L.

The major cardiovascular events prevented were non-fatal myocardial infarction, CHD death, stroke and revascularisation procedures. The HPS results showed that LIPEX 40 mg/day significantly reduced: total and CHD mortality (with no evidence of any increase in non-CHD mortality); major coronary events (a composite endpoint comprised of non-fatal MI or CHD deaths); stroke; coronary revascularisation procedures; hospitalisation for angina; and major vascular events, a composite endpoint which was comprised of major coronary events, stroke, or revascularisation procedures (see Table 5). Risk reductions of approximately one quarter were observed for major vascular events, major coronary events, and stroke. These risk reductions are underestimates due to the fact that 33% of the patients in the intention-to-treat analysis did not comply with the study protocol (i.e., patients allocated placebo took a statin, or patients allocated LIPEX did not take the study drug). Thus, by five years, LIPEX taken consistently would be expected to reduce the risk of these events by about one third.

TABLE 5
Summary of Risk Reductions in HPS

Endpoint	LIPEX (N=10,269)	Placebo (N=10,267)	Absolute Risk Reduction ¹	Relative Risk Reduction	P value
	N (%)	N (%)	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)	
Primary					
Mortality	1,328 (12.9%)	1,504 (14.6%)	1.7 (0.8 to 2.7)	12 (6 to 19)	p<0.001
CHD mortality	571 (5.6%)	689 (6.7%)	1.2 (0.5 to 1.8)	18 (8 to 26)	p<0.001
Non-CHD mortality	757 (7.4%)	815 (7.9%)	0.6 (-0.2 to 1.3)	8 (-2 to 17)	NS
Secondary					
Major vascular events ^{2, 3}	2,026 (19.7%)	2,575 (25.1%)	5.4 (4.2 to 6.5)	24 (19 to 28)	p<0.00001
Major coronary events ^{2, 4}	892 (8.7%)	1,205 (11.7%)	3.1 (2.2 to 3.9)	27 (21 to 33)	p<0.00001
Stroke	448 (4.4%)	588 (5.7%)	1.4 (0.8 to 2.0)	25 (15 to 33)	p<0.00001
Key Tertiary					
Coronary revascularisation	511 (5.0%)	729 (7.1%)	2.1 (1.5 to 2.8)	31 (23 to 38)	p<0.00001
Hospitalisation for angina	1,036 (10.1%)	1,221 (11.9%)	1.8 (0.9 to 2.7)	17 (9 to 23)	p<0.0001

¹ Based on difference in crude event rates.

² See Figure 1 (results by baseline characteristics)

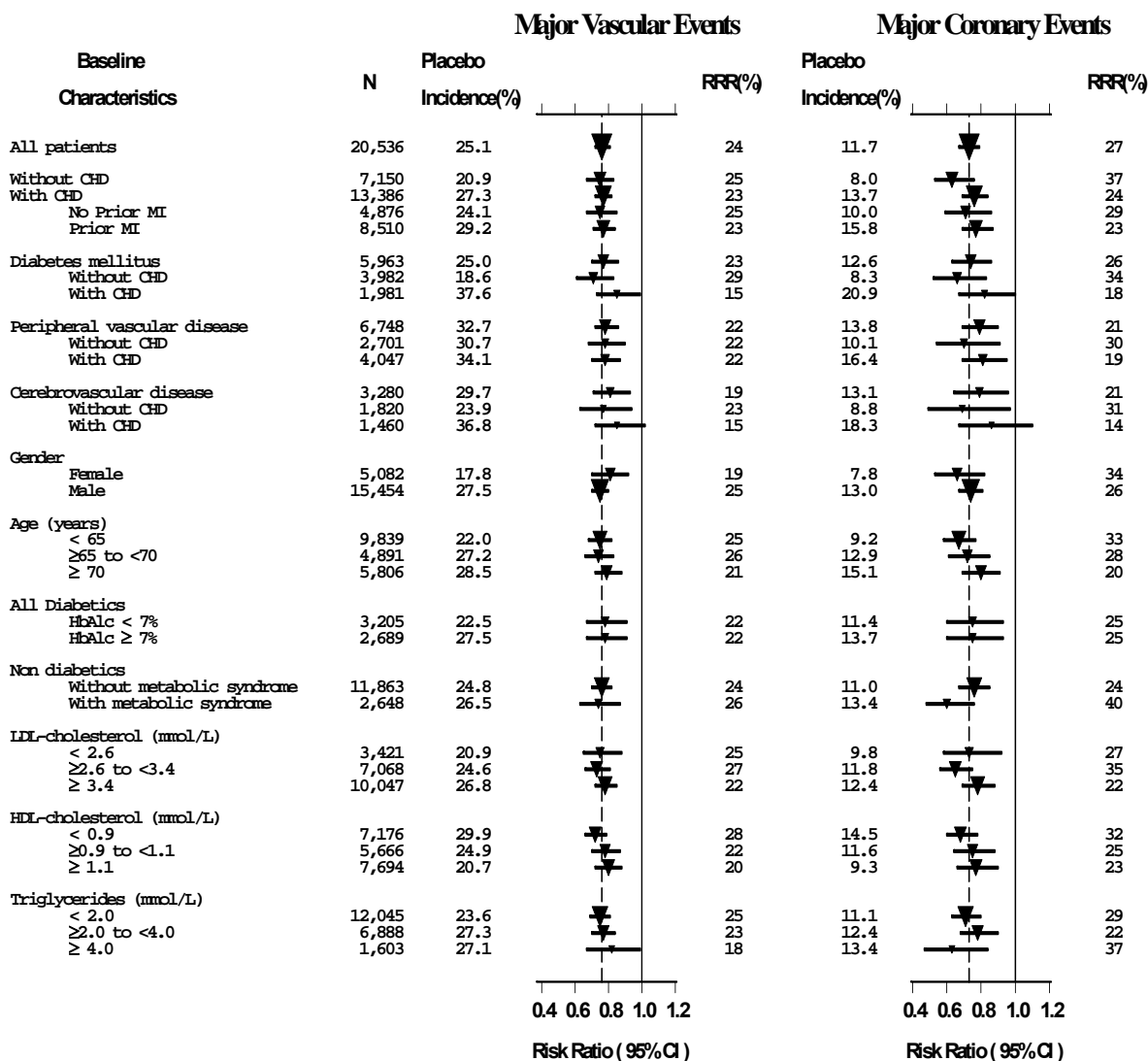
³ A composite of non-fatal myocardial infarction, CHD death, stroke, or revascularisation procedures

⁴ A composite of non-fatal myocardial infarction or CHD deaths

NS = not statistically significant

The effects of LIPEX on major vascular events and major coronary events were similar in all subgroups of patients (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
The Beneficial Effects of Treatment with LIPEX on Major Vascular Events and Major Coronary Events in HPS



N= number of patients in each subgroup. All subgroups were defined at baseline. In this study, patients were classified with metabolic syndrome if they had abdominal obesity, elevated blood pressure, and low HDL-C; other factors such as fasting TG and insulin resistance were not measured. Placebo incidence is the percentage of patients in the placebo group who had one or more MVE or MCE during the study. The inverted triangles are point estimates of the risk ratio in the LIPEX group, with their 95% confidence intervals represented as a line. Conversely, if it fell on the right, the observed outcome was better in patients allocated placebo. The areas of the triangles are proportional to the number of patients with the relative endpoint. The vertical dashed line represents the point estimate of relative risk in the entire study population. RRR(%) represents relative risk reduction, i.e., (1-risk ratio) x 100%.

The risk reductions produced by LIPEX in both major coronary events and major vascular events were evident and consistent across all baseline characteristics shown in Figure 1. In addition, these risk reductions were evident and consistent regardless of prior treated hypertension, creatinine levels up to the entry limit of 2.3 mg/dL, apolipoprotein A-I and B levels, baseline concomitant cardiovascular medications (i.e., ASA, beta blockers, ACE inhibitors, or calcium channel blockers), smoking status, alcohol intake, or obesity.

Hypertriglyceridaemia (Fredrickson type IV hyperlipidaemia)

The results of subgroup analyses from a study including a total of 116 patients with hypertriglyceridaemia (Fredrickson type IV hyperlipidaemia) are presented in Table 6. This study was a double blind, placebo controlled, parallel study, comparing LIPEX 20, 40, and 80 mg/day with placebo. Each treatment group included approximately 30 patients. The respective baseline values for the type IV patients were: total-C = 6.04 mmol/L; LDL-C = 2.59 mmol/L; HDL-C = 0.91 mmol/L; TG 5.01 mmol/L; VLDL-C = 2.44 mmol/L; non-HDL-C = 5.13 mmol/L. The study demonstrated that LIPEX at doses of 20 to 80 mg/day reduced TG 21 to 33% (placebo: 13%), LDL-C 23 to 35% (placebo: +3%), non-HDL-C 26 to 41% (placebo: 1%), and raised HDL-C by 9 to 11% (placebo: 3%).

Table 6
Six-week, Lipid-lowering effects of Simvastatin in Type IV Hyperlipidaemia**
Mean Percent Change from Baseline

	Total-C	LDL-C	HDL-C	TG*	VLDL-C*	Non-HDL-C
Placebo	0	3	3	-13	-10	-1
LIPEX 20 mg/day	-21	-23	9	-21	-33	-26
LIPEX 40 mg/day	-26	-25	9	-21	-35	-32
LIPEX 80 mg/day	-33	-35	11	-33	-44	-41

*median percent change

**approximately 30 patients in each treatment group

Dysbetalipoproteinaemia (Fredrickson type III hyperlipidaemia)

Table 7 presents the subgroup analysis results of 7 patients with Fredrickson type III hyperlipidaemia (dysbetalipoproteinaemia; apo E2/2 and VLDL-C/TG>0.25) from a 130-patient double-blind, placebo-controlled, 3-period crossover study. In this study the median baseline values were: total-C = 324 mg/dL (8.39 mmol/L), LDL-C (+IDL)= 121 (3.13), HDL-C = 31 (0.80), TG = 411 (4.67), VLDL-C (+IDL) = 170 (4.40), and non-HDL-C = 291 (7.54). At a dosage of 80 mg/day, LIPEX reduced LDL-C including intermediate-density lipoproteins (IDL) by 50% (placebo: 8%) and VLDL-C + IDL by 59% (placebo: 4%).

Table 7
Six-week, Lipid-lowering Effects of Simvastatin in Type III Hyperlipidaemia
Median Percent Change from Baseline

	Total-C	LDL-C*	HDL-C	TG	VLDL-C*	Non-HDL-C
Placebo	-8	-8*	-2	+4	-4*	-8
LIPEX 40 mg/day	-50	-50*	+7	-41	-58*	-57
LIPEX 80 mg/day	-52	-51*	+7	-38	-60*	-59

*includes IDL

Clinical Studies in Paediatric Patients (10-17 years of age)

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 175 patients (99 adolescent boys and 76 post-menarchal girls) 10-17 years of age (mean age 14.1 years) with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia (HeFH) were randomised to simvastatin or placebo for 24 weeks (base study). Inclusion in the study required a baseline LDL-C level between 4.1 and 10.4 mmol/L and at least one parent with an LDL-C level > 4.9 mmol/L. The dosage of simvastatin (once daily in the evening) was 10 mg for the first 8 weeks, 20 mg for the second 8 weeks, and 40 mg thereafter. In a 24-week extension, 144 patients elected to continue therapy and received simvastatin 40 mg or placebo.

LIPEX significantly decreased plasma levels of total-C, LDL-C, and Apo B. Results from the extension at 48 weeks were comparable to those observed in the base study.

Table 8 shows results after 24 weeks of treatment - the mean achieved LDL-C value was 3.2 mmol/L (range: 1.6-7.5 mmol/L) in the LIPEX 40 mg group compared to 5.4 mmol/L (range: 3.3-8.7 mmol/L) in the placebo group.

TABLE 8
24-week, Lipid-lowering Effects of Simvastatin in Adolescent Patients with Heterozygous Familial Hypercholesterolaemia
(Mean Percent Change from Baseline)

Dosage	Duration	N		Total-C	LDL-C	HDL-C	TG [†]	Apo B
Placebo	24 Weeks	67	% Change from Baseline (95% CI)	1.6 (-2.2, 5.3)	1.1 (-3.4, 5.5)	3.6 (-0.7, 8.0)	-3.2 (-11.8, 5.4)	-0.5 (-4.7, 3.6)
			Mean baseline, mmol/L (SD)	7.2 (1.3)	5.5 (1.3)	1.2 (0.3)	1.0 (0.6)	1.9* (0.4)*
LIPEX 40 mg/day	24 Weeks	106	% Change from Baseline (95% CI)	-26.5 (-29.6, -23.3)	-36.8 (-40.5, -33.0)	8.3 (4.6, 11.9)	-7.9 (-15.8, 0.0)	-32.4 (-35.9, -29.0)
			Mean baseline, mmol/L (SD)	7.0 (1.1)	5.3 (1.1)	1.2 (0.2)	0.9 (0.5)	1.8* (0.3)*

[†] median percent change

* g/L

Simvastatin compared with placebo showed -31.8% vs +1.3% change in LDL level after 8 weeks on 10 mg and -36.4% vs -2.9% after 8 weeks on 20 mg.

The safety and efficacy of doses above 40 mg daily have not been studied in children with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia. The long-term efficacy of simvastatin therapy in childhood to reduce morbidity and mortality in adulthood has not been established.

The safety and efficacy of simvastatin in children and adolescents with non-familial hypercholesterolaemia, those aged less than 10 years or pre-menarchal girls have not been studied.

INDICATIONS

- LIPEX is indicated as an adjunct to diet for treatment of hypercholesterolaemia.

Prior to initiating therapy with LIPEX, secondary causes of hypercholesterolaemia (e.g. poorly controlled diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism, nephrotic syndrome, dysproteinaemias, obstructive liver disease, other drug therapy, alcoholism) should be identified and treated.

- LIPEX is indicated in patients at high risk of CHD (with or without hypercholesterolaemia) including patients with diabetes, history of stroke or other cerebrovascular disease, peripheral vessel disease, or with existing CHD to reduce the risk of cardiovascular death, major cardiovascular events including stroke, and hospitalisation due to angina pectoris.

These effects do not replace the need to independently control known causes of cardiovascular mortality and morbidity such as hypertension, diabetes and smoking.

- LIPEX is indicated as an adjunct to diet in adolescent boys and girls who are at least one year post-menarche, 10-17 years of age, with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia (HeFH).

Prior to initiating therapy with LIPEX, secondary causes of hypercholesterolaemia (eg poorly controlled diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism, nephrotic syndrome, dysproteinaemias, obstructive liver disease, other drug therapy, alcoholism) should be identified and treated

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Hypersensitivity to any component of this preparation.
- Active liver disease or unexplained persistent elevations of serum transaminases.
- Pregnancy and nursing (see also **PRECAUTIONS**). Women of child bearing potential unless on an effective contraceptive and highly unlikely to conceive.
- Myopathy secondary to other lipid lowering agents.

PRECAUTIONS

Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis

Simvastatin, like other inhibitors of HMG-CoA reductase, occasionally causes myopathy manifested as muscle pain, tenderness or weakness with creatine kinase (CK) above 10X the upper limit of normal (ULN). Myopathy sometimes takes the form of rhabdomyolysis with or without acute renal failure secondary to myoglobinuria, and rare fatalities have occurred. The risk of myopathy is increased by high levels of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity in plasma. Predisposing factors for myopathy include advanced age (≥ 65 years), female gender, uncontrolled hypothyroidism, and renal impairment.

In 4S, there was one case of myopathy among 1399 patients taking simvastatin 20 mg/day and no cases among 822 patients taking 40 mg/day for a median duration of 5.4 years. In two 6 month controlled clinical studies, there was one case of myopathy among 436 patients taking 40 mg and 5 cases among 669 patients taking 80 mg.

- **The risk of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis is increased by concomitant use of simvastatin with the following:**

Potent inhibitors of CYP3A4: eg, itraconazole, ketoconazole, erythromycin, clarithromycin, HIV protease inhibitors, or nefazodone, particularly with higher doses of simvastatin. The risk of myopathy is increased by high levels of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity in plasma. Potent inhibitors of CYP3A4 can raise the plasma levels of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity and increase the risk of myopathy (see below: **DRUG INTERACTIONS/ CYP3A4 INTERACTIONS**).

Other drugs

Lipid-lowering drugs that can cause myopathy when given alone: Gemfibrozil, other fibrates (except fenofibrate), particularly with higher doses of simvastatin (see below: **DRUG INTERACTIONS/ INTERACTIONS WITH LIPID-LOWERING DRUGS THAT CAN CAUSE MYOPATHY WHEN GIVEN ALONE;**

PHARMACOLOGY/Pharmacokinetics). When simvastatin and fenofibrate are given concomitantly, there is no evidence that the risk of myopathy exceeds the sum of the individual risks of each agent.

Cyclosporin or Danazol, particularly with higher doses of simvastatin (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS/OTHER DRUG INTERACTIONS**).

Amiodarone with higher doses of simvastatin (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS/OTHER DRUG INTERACTIONS**). In a clinical trial, myopathy was reported in 6% of patients receiving simvastatin 80 mg and amiodarone. In the same clinical trial, there were no cases of myopathy reported in patients receiving simvastatin 20 mg and amiodarone (see Table 9).

Calcium Channel Blockers

- **Verapamil with higher doses of simvastatin** (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS, OTHER DRUG INTERACTIONS**). Co-administration of verapamil increased the incidence of myopathy to 0.7% (with simvastatin 40 mg) or 1% (with simvastatin 80 mg) (see Table 9).
- **Diltiazem:** Co-administration of diltiazem and simvastatin 80 mg led to a mean 70% increase in systemic exposure to simvastatin derived HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity, with individual increases ranging up to 200%. In a clinical trial, patients on diltiazem treated concomitantly with simvastatin 80 mg had an approximately 3-fold increased risk of myopathy. In clinical studies, the risk of myopathy in patients taking simvastatin 40 with diltiazem was similar to that in patients taking simvastatin without diltiazem (see Table 9 and **DRUG INTERACTIONS, OTHER DRUG INTERACTIONS**).
- **Amlodipine:** In a clinical trial, patients on amlodipine treated concomitantly with simvastatin 80 mg had a slightly increased risk of myopathy. The risk of myopathy in patients taking simvastatin 40 mg was not increased by concomitant amlodipine (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS, OTHER DRUG INTERACTIONS**)

Fusidic acid: Patients on fusidic acid treated concomitantly with simvastatin may have an increased risk of myopathy (see **DRUG INTERACTIONS/ OTHER INTERACTIONS**).

Niacin (≥ 1g/day): see **DRUG INTERACTIONS/INTERACTIONS WITH LIPID-LOWERING DRUGS THAT CAN CAUSE MYOPATHY WHEN GIVEN ALONE**.

Prescribing recommendations for interacting agents are summarised in Table 9 (further details are provided in the text (see also **DRUG INTERACTIONS** and **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY**).

TABLE 9
Drug Interactions Associated with Increased
Risk of Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis

Interacting Agents	Prescribing Recommendations
Itraconazole Ketoconazole Erythromycin Clarithromycin Telithromycin HIV protease inhibitors Nefazodone	Avoid simvastatin
Gemfibrozil* Cyclosporine† Danazol† Other fibrates (except fenofibrate)†	Do not exceed 10 mg simvastatin daily
Amiodarone‡ Verapamil‡	Do not exceed 20 mg simvastatin daily
Diltiazem§ Niacin (nicotinic acid) ≥ 1 g/day	Do not exceed 40 mg simvastatin daily
Amlodipine	Caution when prescribing with 80 mg simvastatin
Fusidic acid	Patients should be closely monitored. Temporary suspension of simvastatin may be considered.
Grapefruit juice	Avoid large quantities of grapefruit juice (>1 litre daily)

* The combined use of simvastatin with gemfibrozil should be avoided, unless the benefits are likely to outweigh the increased risks of this drug combination.

† The benefits of the use of simvastatin in patients receiving cyclosporine or danazol should be carefully weighed against the risks of these combinations.

‡ The combined use of simvastatin at doses higher than 20 mg daily with amiodarone or verapamil should be avoided unless the clinical benefit is likely to outweigh the increased risk of myopathy.

§ The combined use of simvastatin in patients receiving diltiazem should not exceed 40 mg daily unless the clinical benefit is likely to outweigh the increased risk of myopathy.

- **As with other HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, the risk of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis is dose related (see above).**

In a clinical trial database in which 41,413 patients were treated with simvastatin, 24,747 (approximately 60%) of whom were enrolled in studies with median follow up of at least 4 years, the incidence of myopathy was approximately 0.03%, 0.08% and 0.61% at 20, 40 and 80 mg/day respectively. In these trials, patients were carefully monitored and some interacting medicinal products were excluded.

In a major, large, long-term clinical trial (SEARCH) in which patients with a history of myocardial infarction were treated with LIPEX 80 mg/day (mean follow up 6.7 years), the incidence of myopathy was approximately 1.0% compared with 0.02% for patients on 20 mg/day. This includes rhabdomyolysis for which the incidence was 0.1 to 0.2%, all allocated to LIPEX 80 mg/day. There is no universally accepted definition of rhabdomyolysis. In SEARCH, rhabdomyolysis was defined as a subset of myopathy with CK > 40x ULN plus evidence of end organ damage (eg elevated creatinine, dark urine). Approximately half of all the myopathy cases occurred during the first year of treatment.

The incidence of myopathy during each subsequent year of treatment was approximately 0.1%.

Consequently:

1. ***Use of simvastatin concomitantly with potent CYP3A4 inhibitors (eg itraconazole, ketoconazole, erythromycin, clarithromycin, HIV protease inhibitors or nefazodone) should be avoided.*** If treatment with itraconazole, ketoconazole, erythromycin, or clarithromycin is unavoidable, therapy with simvastatin should be suspended during the course of treatment. Concomitant use with other medicines labelled as having a potent inhibitory effect on CYP3A4 at therapeutic doses should be avoided unless the benefits of combined therapy outweigh the increased risk.
2. ***The dose of simvastatin should not exceed 10 mg daily in patients receiving concomitant medication with cyclosporin, danazol, gemfibrozil, or other fibrates (except fenofibrate). The combined use of simvastatin with gemfibrozil should be avoided unless the benefit of further alteration in lipid levels is likely to outweigh the increased risk of this drug combination.*** The benefits of the use of simvastatin in patients receiving other fibrates (except fenofibrate), cyclosporin, or danazol should be carefully weighed against the risks of these drug combinations.
3. ***The dose of simvastatin should not exceed 20 mg daily in patients receiving concomitant medication with amiodarone or verapamil.*** The combined use of simvastatin at doses higher than 20 mg daily with amiodarone or verapamil should be avoided unless the clinical benefit is likely to outweigh the increased risk of myopathy.
4. ***The dose of simvastatin should not exceed 40 mg daily in patients receiving concomitant medication with niacin (nicotinic acid) ≥ 1 g/day.*** Cases of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis have been observed with simvastatin co-administered with lipid-modifying doses (≥ 1 g/day) of niacin. In an on-going, double-blind, randomised cardiovascular outcomes trial conducted in China, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia, an interim analysis by the independent safety monitoring committee revealed that the incidence of myopathy among approximately 4700 UK/Scandinavian patients treated with simvastatin 40 mg or ezetimibe/simvastatin 10/40 coadministered with extended-release (ER) niacin/laropiprant 2 g/40 mg is similar to the overall incidence reported in the clinical trial database for simvastatin 40 mg (0.08%). However, in approximately 3900 Chinese patients in the same treatment arm, the incidence appears to be substantially higher than expected. The risk of myopathy was not increased among 8600 Chinese, UK, or Scandinavian patients in the control arm (placebo and simvastatin 40 mg or ezetimibe/simvastatin 10/40 mg). Because the incidence of myopathy is higher in Chinese than in non-Chinese patients, caution should be used when treating Chinese patients with simvastatin (particularly doses of 40 mg or higher) co-administered with lipid-modifying doses (≥ 1 g/day) of niacin or niacin-containing products. Because the risk of myopathy is dose-related, the use of simvastatin 80 mg with lipid-modifying doses (≥ 1 g/day) of niacin or niacin-containing products is not recommended in Chinese patients. It is unknown whether there is an increased risk of myopathy with co-administration in other Asian patients.
5. ***The dose of simvastatin should not exceed 40 mg daily in patients receiving concomitant medication with diltiazem, unless the clinical benefit is likely to outweigh the increased risk of myopathy.***

6. **Caution should be used when prescribing amlodipine with simvastatin 80 mg as there is a slight increase in the risk of myopathy with concomitant use.**
7. **Caution should be used when prescribing fenofibrate with simvastatin, as either agent can cause myopathy when given alone.** Addition of fibrates to simvastatin typically provides little additional reduction in LDL-C, but further reductions of TG and further increases in HDL-C may be obtained. Combinations of fibrates with simvastatin have been used without myopathy in small, short-term clinical studies with careful monitoring.
8. **Patients on fusidic acid and simvastatin should be closely monitored. Temporary suspension of simvastatin treatment may be considered.**
9. **All patients starting therapy with simvastatin, or whose dose of simvastatin is being increased, should be advised of the risk of myopathy and told to report promptly any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness. Simvastatin therapy should be discontinued immediately if myopathy is diagnosed or suspected.** The presence of these symptoms, and/or a CK level > 10 times the upper limit of normal indicates myopathy. In most cases, when patients were promptly discontinued from treatment, muscle symptoms and CK increases resolved. Periodic CK determinations may be considered in patients starting therapy with simvastatin or whose dose is being increased. Periodic CK determinations are recommended for patients titrating to the 80 mg dose. There is no assurance that such monitoring will prevent myopathy.
10. Many of the patients who have developed rhabdomyolysis on therapy with simvastatin have had complicated medical histories, including renal insufficiency usually as a consequence of long-standing diabetes mellitus. Such patients merit closer monitoring. Therapy with simvastatin should be temporarily stopped a few days prior to elective major surgery and when any major medical or surgical condition supervenes.

HEPATIC EFFECTS

In clinical studies persistent increases (to more than 3 X ULN) in serum transaminases have occurred in 1% of adult patients who received simvastatin. When the drug was interrupted or discontinued in these patients, transaminases usually fell slowly to pretreatment concentration. The increases were not associated with jaundice or other clinical signs or symptoms. There was no evidence of hypersensitivity. Some of these patients had abnormal liver function tests (LFTs) prior to therapy with simvastatin and/or consumed substantial quantities of alcohol.

In 4S (see **CLINICAL TRIALS**), the number of patients with more than one ALT elevation to > 3 X ULN, over the course of the study, was not significantly different between the simvastatin and placebo groups (14 [0.7%] vs. 12 [0.6%]). The incidence of ALT elevations in simvastatin subjects was greater than the incidence of AST elevations and the number of subjects with at least one elevation of ALT greater than 3 X ULN was 46 (2.2%) in the simvastatin group and 32 (1.4%) in the placebo group, the difference not being statistically significant. The frequency of single elevations of ALT to 3 X ULN was significantly higher in the simvastatin group in the first year of the study (20 vs. 8, p=0.023), but not thereafter. Elevated transaminases resulted in the discontinuation of 8 patients from therapy in the simvastatin group (n=2,221) and 5 in the placebo group (n=2,223). Of the 1986 simvastatin

treated patients in 4S with normal LFTs at baseline, only 8 (0.4%) developed consecutive LFT elevations to >3 X ULN and/or were discontinued due to transaminase elevations during the 5.4 years (median follow-up) of the study. All of the patients in this study received a starting dose of 20 mg of simvastatin; 37% were titrated to 40 mg.

In 2 controlled clinical studies in 1105 patients, the 6 month incidence of persistent hepatic transaminase elevations considered drug-related was 0.7% and 1.8% at the 40 and 80 mg dose respectively.

In HPS (see **CLINICAL TRIALS**), in which 20, 536 patients were randomised to receive LIPEX 40 mg/day or placebo, the incidences of elevated transaminases (>3X ULN confirmed by repeat test) were 0.21% (n=21) for patients treated with LIPEX and 0.09% (n=9) for patients treated with placebo.

Liver function tests should be performed before the initiation of treatment and thereafter when clinically indicated. Patients titrated to the 80 mg dose should receive an additional test at 3 months.

Patients who develop increased transaminase levels should have the finding confirmed and be followed thereafter with frequent liver tests until the abnormality(ies) return to normal. Should an increase in AST or ALT of 3 X ULN persist, withdrawal of simvastatin therapy is recommended. Liver biopsy should be considered if elevations persist despite discontinuation of the drug. Unconfirmed reports of "drug-induced hepatitis" have been reported with simvastatin.

The drug should be used with caution in patients who consume substantial quantities of alcohol and/or have a past history of liver disease. Active liver diseases or unexplained transaminase elevations are contraindications to the use of simvastatin.

As with other lipid-lowering agents, moderate (less than 3 X ULN) elevations of serum transaminases have been reported following therapy with simvastatin. These changes were not specific to LIPEX and were also observed with comparative lipid-lowering agents. They generally appeared within the first 3 months after initiation of therapy with simvastatin, were often transient, were not accompanied by any symptoms and interruption of treatment was not required.

OPHTHALMIC EVALUATIONS

Current long-term data from clinical studies, eg 4S, do not indicate an adverse effect of simvastatin on human lens. However, the very long-term effects are not yet established and therefore periodic ophthalmic examinations are recommended after five years of treatment, taking into consideration that in the absence of any drug therapy, an increase in the prevalence of lens opacities with time is expected as a result of aging.

Animal Studies

Cataracts have been detected in 2 year studies in rats and dogs at dose levels greater than 25 and 10 mg/kg/day, respectively, although at a very low incidence. While there is no clear correlation between the magnitude of serum lipid-lowering and the development of cataracts, a consistent relationship has been observed between high serum levels of drug and cataract development with simvastatin and related HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors.

Serum levels (expressed as total inhibitors) in rats at the no-effect dose level were 3-11 times higher than those in humans receiving the maximum daily dose of 80 mg, whereas serum levels at the no-effect level in dogs were approximately two-fold higher than those in humans receiving the maximum daily dose of 80 mg.

THYROID FUNCTION

The concentration of serum thyroxine has been measured at baseline and at the end of simvastatin treatment in 785 patients enrolled in multicentre studies. The results of this analysis indicate that simvastatin has little if any effect upon thyroxine activity.

In one study involving 183 patients treated with simvastatin, four patients had TSH levels within the normal range before commencing simvastatin, but had an elevated TSH after two years of simvastatin therapy.

TRANSIENT HYPOTENSION

Three cases of symptomatic hypotension in the first few days following the start of simvastatin therapy have been reported. Two of the patients were on antihypertensive medication. The hypotension resolved with continued therapy with simvastatin.

NEUROLOGICAL EFFECTS

The neurological adverse effects reported to date include cases of peripheral neuropathy and paraesthesia possibly due to simvastatin.

EFFECTS ON FERTILITY - SPERMATOGENESIS AND TESTOSTERONE

In several studies of over 800 men with hypercholesterolaemia treated with simvastatin 20 mg to 80 mg per day for 12 to 48 weeks, basal testosterone levels were mildly decreased during simvastatin therapy, but there were no consistent changes in LH and FSH. In 86 men treated with simvastatin 20 mg to 80 mg per day, there was no impairment of hCG-stimulated testosterone secretion.

Testicular degeneration has been seen in two dog safety studies with simvastatin. Special studies designed to further define the nature of these changes have not met with success since the effects are poorly reproducible and unrelated to dose, serum cholesterol levels, or duration of treatment. Simvastatin has been administered for up to two years to dogs at a dose of 50 mg/kg/day without any testicular effects.

Fertility of male and female rats was unaffected at oral doses up to 25 mg/kg/day.

USE IN PREGNANCY (Category D)

Category D: Drugs which have caused, are suspected to have caused or may be expected to cause, an increased incidence of human foetal malformations or irreversible damage. These drugs may also have adverse pharmacological effects.

HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, including LIPEX, are contraindicated in pregnancy. The risk of foetal injury outweighs the benefits of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor therapy during pregnancy.

In two series of 178 and 134 cases where pregnant women took an HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor (statin) during the first trimester of pregnancy serious foetal abnormalities occurred in several cases. These included limb and neurological defects, spontaneous abortions and foetal deaths. The exact risk of injury to the foetus occurring after a pregnant woman is exposed to a HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor has not been determined. The current data do not indicate that the risk of foetal injury in women exposed to HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors is high. If a pregnant woman is exposed to a HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor she should be informed of the possibility of foetal injury and discuss the implications with her pregnancy specialist.

Atherosclerosis is a chronic process and the discontinuation of lipid-lowering drugs during pregnancy should have little impact on the outcome of long-term therapy of primary hypercholesterolaemia. Moreover, cholesterol and other products of the cholesterol biosynthesis pathway are essential components for foetal development, including synthesis of steroids and cell membranes.

Because of the ability of inhibitors of HMG-CoA reductase such as LIPEX to decrease the synthesis of cholesterol and possibly other products of the cholesterol biosynthesis pathway, LIPEX is contraindicated during pregnancy. LIPEX should be administered to women of childbearing age only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive. If the patient becomes pregnant while taking this drug, LIPEX should be discontinued and the patient informed of the potential hazard to the foetus.

Animal studies showed increased incidences of foetal resorption at dosages 50 mg/kg/day in rats and 15 mg/kg/day in rabbits. In another study, an increased incidence of skeletal malformations was observed in foetuses of rats dosed with the active metabolite of simvastatin, L-654,969, at a dose level of 60 mg/kg/day. The no-effect dose level of this teratogenic activity has not been established. Other inhibitors of HMG-CoA reductase have also been shown to induce skeletal malformations in rats, and the teratogenic effects may be due to the enzyme inhibitory activity of such drugs. The relevance of these findings to humans is not known.

USE IN LACTATION

Animal studies have shown that weight gain during lactation is reduced in offspring of rats dosed with simvastatin at dosages of 12.5 to 25 mg/kg/day. There is no information from animal studies on whether simvastatin or its metabolites are excreted in breast milk. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk and because of the potential for serious adverse reactions, women taking LIPEX should not breast feed their infants (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**).

PAEDIATRIC USE

Safety and effectiveness of simvastatin in patients 10-17 years of age with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia have been evaluated in a controlled clinical trial in adolescent boys and in girls who were at least one year post-menarche. Patients treated with simvastatin had an adverse experience profile generally similar to that of patients treated

with placebo. **Doses greater than 40 mg have not been studied in this population.** In this limited controlled study, there was no detectable effect on growth or sexual maturation in the adolescent boys or girls, or any effect on menstrual cycle length in girls. (See **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION; ADVERSE REACTIONS and CLINICAL TRIALS**). Adolescent females should be counselled on appropriate contraceptive methods while on simvastatin therapy (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS; PRECAUTIONS and USE IN PREGNANCY**). Simvastatin has not been studied in patients younger than 10 years of age, nor in pre-menarchal girls

The safety and efficacy of doses above 40 mg daily have not been studied in children with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia. The long-term efficacy of simvastatin therapy in childhood to reduce morbidity and mortality in adulthood has not been established.

The safety and efficacy of simvastatin in children and adolescents with non-familial hypercholesterolaemia, those aged less than 10 years or pre-menarchal girls have not been studied.

USE IN THE ELDERLY

In controlled clinical trials, the efficacy of simvastatin for patients over the age of 65 years, as assessed by reduction in total-C and LDL-C levels, was similar to that seen in the population as a whole. There was no apparent increase in the overall frequency of clinical or laboratory adverse findings.

However, in a clinical trial of patients treated with simvastatin 80 mg/day, patients ≥ 65 years of age had an increased risk of myopathy compared to patients < 65 years of age.

CARCINOGENICITY IN ANIMAL STUDIES:

Carcinogenicity studies have been conducted in mice at oral doses ranging from 1 to 400mg/kg/day and in rats at doses of 1 to 100mg/kg/day. Hepatocellular adenomas and carcinomas were observed in both sexes of both species at doses greater than 25 mg/kg/day. Plasma drug levels in rats at this no-effect dose level, expressed as the AUC for enzyme inhibitory activity, were 3 to 11 times greater than in humans at the maximum recommended dose whereas serum levels at the no-effect level in mice were similar to those in humans. Additional findings in mice were increased incidences of pulmonary adenomas at doses greater than 25 mg/kg/day, and of Harderian gland adenomas at 400 mg/kg/day. In rats, the incidence of thyroid follicular adenoma was increased in females at dose greater than 5 mg/kg/day and in males at doses greater than 25 mg/kg/day. These thyroid tumours were associated with focal cystic follicular hyperplasia, and may be a secondary effect reflective of a simvastatin-mediated enhancement of thyroid hormone clearance by the liver.

GENOTOXICITY

Genetic toxicology studies of simvastatin showed no evidence of mutagenic activity in bacteria or in mammalian cells *in vitro*, or of clastogenic activity *in vitro* or in mice *in vivo*. *In vitro* and *in vivo* assays showed that simvastatin does not cause DNA damage in rat hepatocytes.

DRUG INTERACTIONS

CYP3A4 INTERACTIONS

Simvastatin is metabolised by CYP3A4 but has no CYP3A4 inhibitory activity; therefore it is not expected to affect the plasma concentrations of other drugs metabolised by CYP3A4.

Potent CYP3A4 inhibitors

Potent inhibitors of CYP3A4 (below) increase the risk of myopathy by reducing the elimination of simvastatin. [See **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**, and **PHARMACOLOGY/ Pharmacokinetics**].

Itraconazole

Ketoconazole

Erythromycin

Clarithromycin

HIV protease inhibitors

Nefazodone

INTERACTIONS WITH LIPID-LOWERING DRUGS THAT CAN CAUSE MYOPATHY WHEN GIVEN ALONE

The risk of myopathy is also increased by the following lipid-lowering drugs that are not potent inhibitors of CYP3A4, but which can cause myopathy when given alone [See **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].

Gemfibrozil

Other fibrates (except fenofibrate)

When simvastatin and fenofibrate are given concomitantly, there is no evidence that the risk of myopathy exceeds the sum of the individual risks of each agent.

Niacin (nicotinic acid) (≥ 1 g/day)

OTHER DRUG INTERACTIONS:

Cyclosporin or Danazol: The risk of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis is increased by concomitant administration of cyclosporin or danazol particularly with higher doses of simvastatin. Although the mechanism is not fully understood, cyclosporin has been shown to increase the AUC of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. The increase in AUC for simvastatin acid is presumably due, in part, to inhibition of CYP3A4. (see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**).

Amiodarone: The risk of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis is increased by concomitant administration of amiodarone with higher doses of simvastatin [see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].

Calcium Channel Blockers:

- Verapamil: The risk of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis is increased by concomitant administration of verapamil with simvastatin ≥ 40 mg [see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].
- Diltiazem: The risk of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis is increased by concomitant administration of diltiazem with simvastatin 80 mg [see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].
- Amlodipine: Patients on amlodipine treated concomitantly with simvastatin 80 mg have a slightly increased risk of myopathy [see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].

Niacin (nicotinic acid) ($\geq 1\text{g/day}$): Cases of myopathy/rhabdomyolysis have been observed with simvastatin co-administered with lipid-modifying doses ($\geq 1\text{g/day}$) of niacin [see **PRECAUTIONS/Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].

Fusidic acid: Patients on fusidic acid treated concomitantly with simvastatin may have an increased risk of myopathy [see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**]

OTHER INTERACTIONS

Grapefruit juice

Grapefruit juice contains one or more components that inhibit CYP3A4 and can increase the plasma levels of drugs metabolised by CYP3A4. The effect of typical consumption (one 250 mL glass daily) is minimal (13% increase in active plasma HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity as measured by the area under the concentration-time curve) and of no clinical relevance. However, very large quantities (over 1 litre daily) significantly increase the plasma levels of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity during simvastatin therapy and should be avoided [see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**].

COUMARIN DERIVATIVES

In two clinical studies, one in normal volunteers and the other in hypercholesterolaemic patients, simvastatin 20-40 mg/day modestly potentiated the effect of warfarin: the prothrombin time, reported as International Normalised Ratio (INR), increased from a baseline of 1.7 to 1.8 and from 2.6 to 3.4 in the volunteer and patient studies, respectively. In patients taking coumarin anticoagulants, prothrombin time should be determined before starting simvastatin and frequently enough during early therapy to ensure that no significant alteration of prothrombin time occurs. Once a stable prothrombin time has been documented, prothrombin times can be monitored at the intervals usually recommended for patients on coumarin anticoagulants. If the dose of simvastatin is changed or discontinued, the same procedure should be repeated. Simvastatin therapy has not been associated with bleeding or with changes in prothrombin time in patients not taking anticoagulants.

PROPANOLOL

In normal volunteers, concomitant administration of single doses of LIPEX with propranolol produced no clinically significant pharmacokinetic or pharmacodynamic interaction.

ANTIPYRINE

LIPEX had no effect on the pharmacokinetics of antipyrine. However, since LIPEX is metabolised by the CYP3A4, this does not preclude an interaction with other drugs metabolised by the same isoform.

DIGOXIN

Concomitant administration of LIPEX and digoxin in normal volunteers resulted in a slight elevation (less than 0.3 ng/mL) in plasma drug concentrations (as measured by a digoxin radioimmunoassay) compared to concomitant administration of placebo and digoxin. Patients taking digoxin should be monitored appropriately when simvastatin is initiated.

OTHER CONCOMITANT THERAPY

In clinical studies, LIPEX was used concomitantly with beta-blockers, diuretics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) without evidence of clinically significant adverse interactions.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

LIPEX is generally well tolerated; for the most part adverse effects have been mild and transient in nature. In controlled clinical studies less than 2 percent of patients were discontinued due to adverse effects attributable to LIPEX.

The clinical adverse events occurring at an incidence of greater than 0.5% in controlled clinical trials and are considered to be definitely, probably or possibly due to simvastatin may be grouped as follows:

Adverse Events	LIPEX (%) (N=2423)	PLACEBO (%) (N= 167)
Body as a whole		
Abdominal pain	2.5	0.6
Asthenia	0.9	0.6
Digestive		
Constipation	2.5	1.2
Flatulence	2.0	0.6
Nausea	1.2	0.6
Acid regurgitation	0.6	0
Diarrhoea	0.8	0
Dyspepsia	0.7	0
Nervous System		
Headache	1.0	1.2
Insomnia	0.5	0
Dermatological		
Rash	0.7	0

Myopathy has been reported rarely.

In HPS (see **CLINICAL TRIALS**) involving 20,536 patients treated with 40 mg/day of LIPEX (n=10,269) or placebo (n=10,267), the safety profiles were comparable between patients treated with LIPEX and patients treated with placebo over the mean 5.3 years of the study. In this trial, only serious adverse effects and discontinuations due to any adverse effects were recorded. Discontinuation rates due to side effects were comparable (4.2% in patients treated with LIPEX compared with 4.3% in patients treated with placebo). The incidence of myopathy was 0.07% in patients treated with LIPEX compared with 0.03% in patients treated with placebo. This includes rhabdomyolysis for which incidences were 0.04% in patients treated with LIPEX compared with 0.01% in patients treated with placebo. Some of these patients were taking LIPEX concomitantly with medications which are known to increase the

risk of myopathy (see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**). Elevated transaminases (>3X ULN confirmed by repeat test) occurred in 0.21% of patients treated with LIPEX compared with 0.09% of patients treated with placebo.

In 4S (see **CLINICAL TRIALS**) involving 4444 patients treated with 20-40 mg/day of LIPEX (n=2221) or placebo (n=2223), the safety and tolerability profiles were comparable between treatment groups over the median 5.4 years of the study.

The following additional adverse effects were reported either in uncontrolled clinical trials or in marketed use: pruritus, alopecia, dizziness, muscle cramps, myalgia, depression, pancreatitis, paraesthesia, peripheral neuropathy, memory impairment, insomnia, vomiting, gynaecomastia, anaemia, erectile dysfunction, and interstitial lung disease.

Rhabdomyolysis and hepatitis/jaundice occurred rarely and hepatic failure occurred very rarely. An apparent hypersensitivity syndrome that included some of the following features has been reported rarely: angioedema, lupus-like syndrome, polymyalgia rheumatica, dermatomyositis, vasculitis, thrombocytopenia, eosinophilia, ESR increased, arthritis, arthralgia, urticaria, photosensitivity, fever, flushing, dyspnoea and malaise.

LABORATORY TEST FINDINGS

Marked and persistent increases of serum transaminases have been reported infrequently. Elevated alkaline phosphatase and γ -glutamyl transpeptidase have been reported. Liver function test abnormalities have generally been mild and transient. Increases in serum CK levels, derived from skeletal-muscle, have been reported (see **PRECAUTIONS**).

PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS (AGES 10-17 YEARS)

In a study involving paediatric patients 10-17 years of age with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia (n=175), the safety and tolerability profile of the group treated with LIPEX was generally similar to that of the group treated with placebo (see **PRECAUTIONS, PAEDIATRIC USE; CLINICAL TRIALS**).

ADVERSE EFFECTS - CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP UNKNOWN

The following adverse effects have been reported; however, a causal relationship to therapy with LIPEX has not been established: erythema multiforme including Stevens-Johnson syndrome, leucopenia, impotence, proteinuria, and purpura.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

The dosage range for LIPEX is 10-80 mg/day, given as a single dose in the evening. Adjustments of dosage, if required, should be made at intervals of not less than 4 weeks, to a maximum of 80 mg/day given as a single dose in the evening. The 80 mg dose of LIPEX should be used only for those patients who have not achieved their LDL-C goal utilising the 40 mg dose (see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis**).

PATIENTS AT HIGH RISK OF CORONARY HEART DISEASE (CHD) OR WITH EXISTING CHD

The usual starting dose of LIPEX is 40 mg/day given as a single dose in the evening in patients at high risk of CHD (with or without hypercholesterolaemia), ie, patients with diabetes, history of stroke or other cerebrovascular disease, peripheral vessel disease, or with existing CHD. Drug therapy can be initiated simultaneously with diet and exercise.

HYPERCHOLESTEROLAEMIA AND COMBINED HYPERLIPIDAEMIA (PATIENTS WHO ARE NOT IN THE RISK CATEGORIES ABOVE)

The patient should be placed on a standard cholesterol-lowering diet before receiving LIPEX and should continue on this diet during treatment with LIPEX.

The recommended starting dose is 10 to 20 mg per day in the evening. Therapy should be individualised according to the patient's response.

CONCOMITANT THERAPY

LIPEX is effective alone or in combination with bile acid sequestrants.

In patients taking the immunosuppressive drug cyclosporin, danazol, gemfibrozil, or other fibrates (except fenofibrate) concomitantly with LIPEX, the dose of LIPEX should not exceed 10mg/day. In patients taking amiodarone or verapamil concomitantly with LIPEX, the dose of LIPEX should not exceed 20 mg/day. In patients taking diltiazem concomitantly with LIPEX, the dose of LIPEX should not exceed 40 mg/day. (see **PRECAUTIONS/ Myopathy/Rhabdomyolysis** and **DRUG INTERACTIONS**).

In patients taking niacin (nicotinic acid) ≥ 1 g/day, the dose of LIPEX should not exceed 40 mg/day (see **PRECAUTIONS**).

DOSAGE IN RENAL INSUFFICIENCY

LIPEX does not undergo significant renal excretion.

However, because no data is available in patients with impaired renal function, caution should be used in these patients.

In patients with severe renal insufficiency (creatinine clearance < 30 mL/min), dosages above 10 mg/day should be carefully considered and, if deemed necessary, implemented cautiously.

DOSAGE IN PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS (10-17 YEARS OF AGE) WITH HETEROZYGOUS FAMILIAL HYPERCHOLESTEROLAEMIA

The recommended usual starting dose is 10 mg once a day in the evening. The recommended dosing range is 10-40 mg/day; the maximum recommended dose is 40 mg/day. Doses should be individualised according to the recommended goal of therapy (see **CLINICAL TRIALS**).

OVERDOSAGE

A few cases of overdosage have been reported; the maximum dose taken was 3.6 g. All patients recovered without sequelae. General measures should be adopted, and liver function should be monitored.

Contact the Poisons Information Centre for advice on management.

PRESENTATION AND STORAGE CONDITIONS

LIPEX - 10mg, peach coloured, oval shaped, film-coated tablets, marked 'MSD 735'. Supplied in blister packs of 30 tablets.

LIPEX - 20mg, tan coloured, oval-shaped, film-coated tablets, marked 'MSD 740'. Supplied in blister packs of 30 tablets.

LIPEX - 40mg, brick red coloured, oval, film-coated tablets, one side engraved with "MSD 749", other side plain. Supplied in blister packs of 30 tablets.

LIPEX - 80 mg, brick red, capsule shaped, convex, film-coated tablets, one side engraved with 543, other side engraved 80. Supplied in blister packs of 30 tablets.

Storage: Store below 30°C. Avoid transient temperatures above 50°C.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SPONSOR

MERCK SHARP & DOHME (AUSTRALIA) Pty. Limited
54-68 Ferndell Street, South Granville, N.S.W., 2142.

POISON SCHEDULE OF THE MEDICINE

Prescription only medicine (S4)

DATE OF APPROVAL

This product information was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration on 4 April 2011.