

Indiana Medicaid Therapeutics Committee **Therapeutic Class Review Summary**

Therapeutic Class:

Topical Post-Herpetic Neuralgia Agents

Overview:

Post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) is the persistence of pain of herpes zoster more than three months after resolution of a herpes zoster rash. The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) estimates that 10 to 15% of those with herpes zoster are affected by PHN, and the incidence increases with age. Use of antivirals within the first 72 hours of the onset of the rash may prevent PHN; therefore, treatment of PHN begins with early diagnosis and treatment of herpes zoster. AAN also estimates that 40 to 50% of PHN patients do not respond to any treatment.

Topical analgesics are commonly used for the short-term relief of PHN, and are recommended as part of the AAN practice parameter for PHN. In the past, lidocaine ointment was compounded by pharmacists for the topical treatment of PHN. Lidocaine produces its analgesic effect through a reversible nerve conduction blockade by diminishing nerve membrane permeability to sodium. This blockade, which affects autonomic, sensory, and motor nerve fibers, decreases the rate of membrane depolarization, thereby increasing the threshold for electrical excitability. Direct nerve membrane penetration occurs when lidocaine is applied topically. A 5% lidocaine topical patch, Lidoderm[®], was given orphan drug designation in 1995 for the treatment of pain associated with PHN and received FDA approval for this indication in 1999. The duration of pain relief with Lidoderm[®] ranges from 12 to 24 hours, and patients can apply up to three patches, one at a time, in a 24-hour period. Side-effects are usually mild and include local skin reactions such as erythema.

Other therapies recommended by AAN as effective options in the treatment of PHN include tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), gabapentin, pregabalin, and opioid analgesics. The goal of treatment is to provide benefit in terms of decreased pain and improved quality of life. A combination of different treatment modalities is typically implemented, as no single therapy appears to be completely effective.

GENERIC NAME	TRADE NAME	MANUFACTURER	GENERIC
Lidocaine 5% Topical Patch	Lidoderm [®]	Endo Pharmaceuticals	N

Summary:

Topical analgesics are often used in the treatment post-herpetic neuralgia. A 5% topical lidocaine patch, Lidoderm[®] is an effective agent in the treatment of the pain associated with PHN. The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) practice parameter for the treatment of PHN recommends Lidoderm as an effective treatment option. A combination of agents may be required for pain relief in many patients; selection of agents should be based on clinical response, safety, and cost effectiveness.