LUNESTA (eszopiclone) Fact Sheet

Manufacturer: Sepracor; patent expires 2012.

Indications:

- Indicated for both sleep initiation and sleep maintenance. Indicated for both short-term and chronic insomnia.

Mechanism: Lunesta is the purified S-enantiomer of zopiclone, which is a non-benzodiazepine approved for treating insomnia in 80 countries. Binds to the GABA-benzodiazepine receptor complex, like benzodiazepines, but is more selective for the omega-1 receptor subtype than BZs.

Dosing:

- Supplied as 1 mg light blue, 2 mg white, and 3 mg dark blue tablets.
- Start at 1 mg QHS for elderly, 2-3 mg QHS otherwise.
- No higher than 1 mg in hepatic impairment.

Side Effects:

- Most common: An unpleasant taste, and somnolence.
- Even though it has a long half life, studies have shown little in the way of cognitive impairment even 6 hours after dosing.
- Classified as a Schedule IV drug, but abuse potential is likely somewhat less than benzodiazepines.
- Pregnancy Category C

Pharmacokinetics:

- Half life is about 6 hours, 9 hours in the elderly.

Drug-drug interactions:

- Substrate of 3A4, blood level doubled by ketoconazole.
- Lunesta does not affect any liver enzymes
- A high fat meal delays absorption by an hour

Advantages/disadvantages compared to others in class:

- One of the few hypnotics FDA approved for long-term use, although it's likely that all the other non-benzodiazepines are equally safe used chronically.