DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DRUG OFFICE

BY FAX

1 August 2014

Dr. Donald LI
President
Hong Kong Academy of Medicine
(Fax Number: 2505 5577)

Dear Dr. LI,

NuvaRing (etonogestrel / ethinyl estradiol slow release vaginal ring) - New Contraindications

Your attention is drawn to the Health Canada’s announcement regarding new contraindications that have been added to the NuvaRing Product Monograph (PM).

NuvaRing is a combined hormonal contraceptive (CHC) indicated for conception control. The following points summarize the important changes that have been made to the PM of the product in Canada:

- NuvaRing should NOT be used by women who smoke (if over age 35), or who have severe or multiple risk factors for thrombosis, including: valvular heart disease with complications, hypertension, severe dyslipoproteinemia, abnormality in proteins that regulate coagulation, diabetes mellitus with vascular involvement, or major surgery with prolonged immobilization.
- NuvaRing should NOT be used by women who have experienced migraines with focal neurological symptoms, or pancreatitis associated with severe hypertriglyceridemia.
- Prescribers should consider the above new contraindications and review the updated PM when discussing treatment options with their patients.

In addition, changes have also been made under Warnings and Precautions section of the PM regarding the possible adverse events of systemic lupus erythematosus, sydenham’s chorea, herpes gestationis, otosclerosis-related hearing loss, hepatocellular carcinoma, Crohn’s disease, colitis ulcerosa and angioedema.

Please refer to the Health Canada’s website for details:

In Hong Kong, NuvaRing Vaginal Rings (HK-55149) is a registered pharmaceutical product. It is registered by Merck Sharp & Dohme (Asia) Ltd. (MSD) and is a prescription-only medicine indicated for contraception in women of fertile age. MSD has submitted application to update the package insert of its product with new safety information similar to the Health Canada’s announcement. So far, the Department of Health (DH) has not received any local adverse drug reaction report related to the product. In view of the Health Canada’s announcement, the above new safety information will be reported to the Registration Committee of the Pharmacy and Poisons Board for consideration. The DH will remain vigilant on safety updates and regulatory actions related to the drug decided by other overseas health authorities. Healthcare professionals are advised to balance the risk of possible adverse effects against the benefit of treatment.

Please report any adverse events caused by drugs to the Pharmacovigilance Unit of Department of Health (tel. no.: 2319 2920, fax: 2186 9845 or email: adr@dh.gov.hk). For details, please refer to the website at Drug Office under “ADR reporting”; http://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/adr.html. You may wish to visit the Drug Office’s website for subscription and browsing of “Drug News” which is a monthly digest of drug safety news and information issued by Drug Office.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

for Assistant Director (Drug)

We build a healthy Hong Kong and aspire to be an internationally renowned public health authority