



DRUG REVIEW



November 2021

RYBELSUS® - The First Oral Glucagon-Like-Peptide 1 Agonist

Diabetes is a chronic condition where blood sugar levels are elevated. As per Diabetes Canada, 1 in 3 Canadians are living with diabetes or prediabetes. It has been proven that patients with diabetes have increased risk for other comorbidities such as heart disease, kidney disease, and vision impairment - all of which can decrease quality of life and eventually lead to death.

The current standard of care is metformin, which belongs to the class of biguanides. However, patients with more severe disease will often require the addition of another agent from a different class. Examples of additional classes are dipeptidyl-peptidase-4 inhibitors (e.g. Januvia), sodium-glucose-linked-transporter-2 inhibitors (e.g. Jardiance) and glucagon-like-peptide 1 agonists, (e.g. Victoza). These additional classes are recommended as add-on or second-line therapy.

Rybelsus® is the first glucagon-like-peptide 1 agonist (GLP-1 agonist) that is taken orally. Previous GLP-1 agonists such as Victoza are administered via subcutaneous injection. This class of agents acts by binding and activating GLP-1 receptors, resulting in increased insulin secretion, decreased inappropriate glucagon secretion and slowed gastric emptying.

Studies have been conducted comparing the efficacy of Rybelsus® to agents of other classes and within the same class. For example, Rybelsus® had superior reduction in blood-sugar, i.e. A1C by 0.7% and 0.3%, compared to Jardiance and Victoza respectively.

Rybelsus® is taken as a tablet orally once daily. The maximum dose is 14mg daily, which results in an annual cost of \$2,544 and is priced at a premium compared to other treatment options. Therefore, to ensure the most cost-effective first-line options are tried first, Rybelsus® will be placed under Special Authorization for ClaimSecure groups subscribing to Managed Formularies. Rybelsus will be fully covered for groups subscribing to open formularies.

Drug Name	Rybelsus®
Drug Ingredient	Semaglutide
Annual Cost	\$2,544
Coverage Details	Special Authorization for Managed Plans; Fully Covered for Open Plans

ClaimSecure Inc. reserves the right to amend in part, or in its entirety, its Special Authorization guidelines.

References:

1. What is Diabetes. Diabetes Canada. 2020. Available at: <https://www.diabetes.ca/about-diabetes/what-is-diabetes>
2. Rybelsus Product Monograph. Novo-Nordisk Canada Inc. April 2020. Available at: https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00055582.PDF

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