LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On Oclacitinib

A team of dermatologists responds to Generalized Demodicosis in a Golden Retriever from the November 2015 issue.

On behalf of Zoetis, we would like to discuss the following key notes from “Generalized Demodicosis in a Golden Retriever.”

Our specific comments relate to the section on the use of oclacitinib, which reads, “Although this dog is pruritic, oclacitinib is contraindicated. In clinical trials, some dogs developed demodicosis when treated with oclacitinib at 3 times the label dose. This may be a consequence of the immunomodulating activity of oclacitinib. Therefore, oclacitinib is contraindicated in patients with demodicosis or a history of demodicosis.”

- The data referenced are not from a clinical study but a margin-of-safety study involving laboratory animals. Specifically, this study was in 6-month-old dogs, some of which developed demodicosis after 4 months of receiving high doses (3x and 5x the label dose) of oclacitinib, leading to discontinuation of the study. This did not occur in a similar margin-of-safety study in 12-month-old laboratory dogs. As a consequence, a margin of safety was established in 12-month-old dogs but not in juvenile dogs, and the label indicates that oclacitinib should only be administered to dogs at least 12 months of age.

- It is not clear that the first and last sentences, stating that oclacitinib is contraindicated in this patient, are the opinion of the author. The package insert states that oclacitinib may increase susceptibility to demodicosis and that patients being treated with oclacitinib should be monitored for development of demodicosis. The FDA did not mandate that current demodicosis or a history of demodicosis be considered a contraindication for oclacitinib administration; thus, the author’s statements contradict the label and reflect a personal opinion, as there are no contraindications on the label.

This case example is an excellent opportunity to emphasize that oclacitinib is indicated for the control of pruritus in dogs with allergic dermatitis and control of atopic dermatitis in dogs older than 12 months of age. At no point in this case presentation was it noted nor implied that the patient had either allergic or atopic dermatitis. Zoetis goes to considerable lengths to position oclacitinib for dogs older than 12 months of age with allergic dermatitis and atopic dermatitis, and not as a panacea for every dog that may be pruritic. We feel it is important to emphasize this point and encourage thorough evaluation of pruritic patients to rule out common infectious and parasitic causes of itch before considering a diagnosis of allergic dermatitis or atopic dermatitis and thus possible use of treatments such as corticosteroids, oclacitinib, and cyclosporine.

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