

LeponeX®

Composition

Excipients: magnesium stearate; silica, colloidal anhydrous; povidone, talc; maize starch; lactose monohydrate. Information might differ in some countries.

Pharmaceutical form and quantity of active substance per unit
25 mg and 100 mg tablets.

Indications/Potential uses

A. **Treatment-resistant schizophrenia**
LeponeX is indicated only in treatment-resistant schizophrenic patients unresponsive to or intolerant of classic antipsychotics according to the following definitions:
The criterion of nonresponse is met if previous treatment attempts with conventional antipsychotics, given at appropriate dosage for a sufficient period of time, have not resulted in adequate clinical improvement.
Intolerability applies when severe, untreatable neurological adverse effects (extrapyramidal symptoms or tardive dyskinesia) occur and make effective antipsychotic therapy with standard antipsychotic agents impossible.

B. **(Long-term) reduction of recurrent suicidal behaviour in patients with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder**
LeponeX is indicated for long-term reduction of the risk of recurrent suicidal behaviour in patients with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder who are judged to be at risk based on their clinical history and current clinical picture.

C. **Psychosis in the course of Parkinson's disease**
LeponeX is indicated for psychosis in the course of Parkinson's disease after failure of standard treatment.

Failure of standard treatment is defined as lack of control of psychotic symptoms and/or the occurrence of functionally unacceptable exacerbation of motor symptoms, after the following measures have been taken:
Discontinuation of anticholinergic medication, including tricyclic antidepressants; attempt to reduce the dose of dopaminergic antiparkinsonian drugs.

Dosage/Administration
The dosage must be adjusted individually. For each patient, the lowest effective dose should be used. Careful dose titration and a divided dosage regimen are necessary in order to minimise the risk of hypotension, seizures and sedation. The total daily amount may be divided into unequal doses, the largest of which should be taken at bedtime.

The following dosages are recommended:
A. **Treatment-resistant schizophrenia**
Starting dose:
12.5 mg (half a 25 mg tablet) once or twice on the first day, followed by one or two 25 mg tablets on the second day. If well tolerated, the dose may then be increased in increments of 25 to 50 mg/day in order to achieve a daily dose of 300 mg within 2 to 3 weeks. Thereafter, if required, the daily dose may be further increased in increments of 50 to 100 mg at half-weekly or, preferably, weekly intervals.

Therapeutic dose range:
In most patients, the onset of antipsychotic effect occurs at a daily dosage of 300 to 450 mg, given in two to four divided doses. Some patients require lower steady doses, however others require up to 600 mg.

Maximum dose:
In adult outpatients, the maximum permissible dose is 900 mg/day, with maximum individual increments of 100 mg. Increased adverse effects (in particular seizures) are possible at doses exceeding 450 mg/day.

Maintenance dose:
Once the maximum therapeutic effect has been attained, many patients can be effectively maintained on a lower dose. Careful dose reduction is therefore recommended. Treatment should be maintained for at least 6 months. If the daily dose does not exceed 200 mg, once-daily administration in the evening may be appropriate.

Discontinuation of therapy:
In the event of planned discontinuation of LeponeX, it is recommended that the dose be reduced gradually over a period of 1 to 2 weeks. If abrupt discontinuation is necessary (e.g. because of leuponeX), the patient should be closely monitored for recurrence of psychosis and symptoms of cholinergic rebound (e.g. increased sweating, headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea).

Resumption of therapy:
If more than two days have elapsed since the last dose of LeponeX was taken, treatment should be resumed with 12.5 mg (half a 25 mg tablet) once or twice on the first day. If this dose is well tolerated, titration to the therapeutic level can then proceed more quickly than is recommended for initial treatment. However, re-titration should be carried out with extreme caution in any patient who has previously experienced respiratory or cardiac arrest with initial dosing (see "Other precautions"), but was then able to be successfully titrated to a therapeutic dose.

Switching from another antipsychotic to LeponeX:

It is generally recommended that LeponeX should not be combined with other antipsychotic agents. When LeponeX therapy is to be initiated in a patient undergoing oral antipsychotic therapy, it is recommended that – if possible – the other antipsychotic agent should first be discontinued by tapering the dosage downwards over a period of about one week. Once the antipsychotic agent has been completely discontinued for at least 24 hours, LeponeX treatment can be started as described above.

A lower starting dose and slower dose increases are recommended for patients with a history of seizures or with cardiovascular, renal or hepatic disorders.

Dose adjustment is necessary in patients receiving drugs that interact with LeponeX, such as benzodiazepines, carbamazepine or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (see "Interactions").

B. **(Long-term) reduction of recurrent suicidal behaviour in patients with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder**
The dosage and administration guidelines described above for the use of LeponeX in patients with treatment-resistant schizophrenia are also valid when LeponeX is used in patients with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder who show evidence of a long-term risk of recurrent suicidal behaviour.

C. **Psychosis over the course of Parkinson's disease after failure of standard treatment**
Starting dose:
The starting dose must not exceed 12.5 mg/day (half a 25 mg tablet), taken as a single evening dose. Subsequent dose increases must be by 12.5 mg increments, with no more than two increments a week up to a maximum of 50 mg, a dose that must not be reached until the end of the second week. The total daily amount should preferably be given as a single evening dose.

Maintenance dose:
The mean effective dose is usually between 25 and 37.5 mg/day. If treatment for at least one week at a dose of 50 mg/day fails to provide a satisfactory therapeutic response, the dosage may be cautiously increased by increments of 12.5 mg/week.

A dose of 50 mg/day should only be exceeded in exceptional cases and the maximum dose of 100 mg/day should never be exceeded.

Dose increases should be limited or deferred if orthostatic hypotension, excessive sedation or confusion occurs. Blood pressure should be monitored during the first weeks of treatment.

When there has been complete remission of psychotic symptoms for at least 2 weeks, an increase in antiparkinsonian medication is possible if indicated on the basis of motor status. If this approach results in the recurrence of psychotic symptoms, the LeponeX dose may be increased by increments of 12.5 mg/week up to a maximum of 100 mg/day, taken as a single dose or in two divided doses (see above).

Ending therapy:
Gradual dose reduction by 12.5 mg steps over a period of at least one week (preferably two) is recommended.

Treatment must be discontinued immediately in the event of neutropenia or agranulocytosis, as described in the "Warnings and precautions" section. In this situation, close psychiatric monitoring of the patient is essential since symptoms may recur quickly.

Special populations
Patients with heart disease
Patients with heart disease should be started on a low dose (1x 12.5 mg on the first day). The dose increase should only be slow and in small increments. Use in patients with severe cardiovascular disorders is contraindicated (see "Contraindications").

Patients with renal impairment
Patients with mild to moderate renal impairment should be started on a low dose (1x 12.5 mg on the first day). The dose increase should only be slow and in small increments.

Patients with hepatic impairment
Patients with hepatic impairment should only be administered LeponeX with care and the liver function should be monitored regularly.

Children and adolescents
There are no studies available for children and adolescents on the safety and efficacy of LeponeX.

Elderly patients
Treatment is recommended at a particularly low dose (12.5 mg given once on the first day), with subsequent dose increments restricted to 25 mg/day for elderly patients (> 60 years old).

Contraindications
Known or suspected hypersensitivity to clozapine or any other component of the LeponeX formulation
Patients unable to undergo regular blood tests;
History of granulocytopenia or agranulocytosis (with the exception of granulocytopenia or agranulocytosis from previous chemotherapy);
Impaired bone marrow function;
Uncontrolled epilepsy;

- Alcoholic and other toxic psychoses, drug intoxication, comatose conditions;
- Circulatory collapse and/or central nervous system (CNS) depression of any cause;
- Severe renal or cardiac disorders, myocarditis;
- Acute liver disease associated with nausea, loss of appetite or jaundice; progressive liver disease; hepatic failure;
- Paralytic ileus;
- LeponeX treatment must not be given concomitantly with drugs that can potentially cause agranulocytosis; concomitant use of depot antipsychotics is discouraged.

Warnings and precautions

Warnings
Potentially severe adverse effects of LeponeX therapy are granulocytopenia and agranulocytosis, which occur with an estimated frequency of 3% and 0.7%, respectively. Agranulocytosis can be life-threatening.
The incidence of agranulocytosis and the fatality rate in those developing agranulocytosis have decreased markedly since the institution of white blood cell (WBC) and absolute neutrophil count (ANC) monitoring. The precautionary measures stated below are therefore mandatory.

LeponeX must therefore only be used in schizophrenic patients or patients with psychotic disorders occurring during the course of Parkinson's disease, in whom there is a demonstrated lack of response or inadequate response to other antipsychotic agents or who experience severe extrapyramidal side effects in patients with tardive dyskinesia with other antipsychotic agents.
LeponeX may also be used in schizophrenic and schizoaffective patients who are at long-term risk of recurrent suicidal behaviour, based on their clinical history or current clinical picture.

Patients in whom LeponeX has been discontinued due to white blood cell deficiencies (see above) must not be re-exposed to LeponeX. It is recommended that the results of blood counts be confirmed by performing counts on two consecutive days. However, LeponeX should be discontinued after the first blood count.

LeponeX prescriptions must be marked "CBC" (= complete blood count) by the prescribing physician.
LeponeX must be discontinued in the event of an eosinophil count exceeding 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³); see "Adverse effects"; therapy should only be restarted after the eosinophil count has fallen below 1.0 x 10⁹/litre (1,000/mm³). In the event of thrombocytopenia (see "Adverse effects"), LeponeX should be discontinued if the platelet count falls below 50 x 10⁹/litre (50,000/mm³).

Other precautions
Cardiotoxicity
Patients with heart disease should be started on a low dose (1 x 12.5 mg on the first day). The dose increase should only be increased slowly and in small increments (see "Dosage/Administration"). Use in patients with severe cardiovascular disorders is contraindicated (see "Contraindications"). Patients with a history of heart disease or abnormal cardiac findings on physical examination should be referred to a specialist for further investigation, which should include an ECG (see "Contraindications").

Such patients should only receive LeponeX if the expected benefits clearly outweigh the risks. The treating physician should consider performing a pre-treatment ECG.
Orthostatic hypotension, with or without syncope, may occur during LeponeX therapy. In rare cases (approx. one in 3,000 patients), collapse may be profound and may be accompanied by cardiac and/or respiratory arrest and possible fatal outcome. Such events are most likely during the initial titration phase in association with rapid dose escalation. In isolated cases, they have even occurred after the first dose. Such complications seem to occur more frequently with concomitant use of benzodiazepines or other psychotropic agents (see "Interactions"). Close medical supervision is therefore necessary at the start of LeponeX therapy.

In patients diagnosed with cardiomyopathy while on LeponeX treatment, there is the risk of developing mitral valve incompetence. Mitral valve incompetence has been reported in cases of cardiomyopathy related to LeponeX treatment. These cases of mitral valve incompetence were mild or moderate in severity, detected on two-dimensional echocardiography (2D-ECG).
Monitoring of standing and supine blood pressure is necessary during the first weeks of treatment in patients with Parkinson's disease.

Resting tachycardia, accompanied by arrhythmia, dyspnoea or symptoms of heart failure, may occur in rare cases during the first two months of treatment and very rarely thereafter (see "Adverse effects"). If these symptoms occur, particularly during the titration period, diagnostic measures should be initiated as quickly as possible to rule out myocarditis. The symptoms of clozapine-induced myocarditis may also resemble those of myocardial infarction or influenza. There have also been reports of fatal cases of myocardial infarction. The assessment of causality was very difficult due to severe pre-existing cardiac disorders. If myocarditis or cardiomyopathy is suspected, LeponeX must be discontinued immediately and the patient referred to a cardiologist without delay.

The same signs and symptoms may also occur in the later stages of therapy and may then be associated with cardiomyopathy. In such cases, further investigation is indicated. If the diagnosis of cardiomyopathy is confirmed, LeponeX must be discontinued. Patients who have had clozapine-induced myocarditis or cardiomyopathy should not be re-exposed to clozapine.

Hyperglycaemia
Cases of diabetes mellitus, severe hyperglycaemia and even ketoacidosis or hyperosmolar coma have been reported, even in patients with no prior history of hyperglycaemia or diabetes mellitus. No causal relationship to LeponeX has been established, although blood glucose levels returned to normal in most patients following discontinuation of LeponeX. Re-exposure was positive in a small number of cases. The effect of LeponeX on glucose metabolism in patients with pre-existing diabetes mellitus has not been studied. Patients with diabetes mellitus starting on antipsychotic drugs should have their blood sugar levels regularly monitored. Patients with risk factors of diabetes mellitus (e.g. excess weight, a family history of diabetes) starting on atypical antipsychotic drugs should have their fasting blood sugar levels tested prior to and regularly during treatment. The possibility of impaired glucose tolerance should be considered in patients treated with LeponeX who develop hyperglycaemia with symptoms such as polydipsia, polyuria, polyphagia or weakness. Patients, who develop symptoms of hyperglycaemia during treatment with atypical antipsychotic drugs, should have their fasting blood sugar levels tested. In some cases, hyperglycaemia may return to normal after stopping treatment with atypical antipsychotic drugs. In other cases, hyperglycaemia may require further treatment despite stopping using atypical antipsychotic drugs. Discontinuation of LeponeX should be considered in patients with significant treatment-related hyperglycaemia.

Discontinuation of therapy for non-haematological reasons:
Patients who have been on LeponeX for longer than 18 weeks and have had their treatment interrupted for more than 3 days but less than 4 weeks should have their WBC count monitored weekly for an additional 6 weeks. Provided no abnormalities are found, monitoring at intervals not exceeding 4 weeks may be resumed. If LeponeX therapy has been interrupted for 4 weeks or longer, weekly monitoring is required for the next 18 weeks of therapy.

Low WBC count and ANC:
If, during the first 18 weeks of LeponeX therapy, the WBC count falls to between 3.5 x 10⁹/litre (3,500/mm³) and 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) and/or the ANC falls to between 2.0 x 10⁹/litre (2,000/mm³) and 1.5 x 10⁹/litre (1,500/mm³), haematological evaluations must be performed at least twice weekly. The same applies if, after 18 weeks of therapy, the values fall to between 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) and 2.5 x 10⁹/litre (2,500/mm³) for WBC count and to between 1.5 x 10⁹/litre (1,500/mm³) and 1.0 x 10⁹/litre (1,000/mm³) for ANC.

In addition, a repeat WBC count and a differential blood count must be performed if the WBC count is found to be significantly lower than at baseline. "Significantly lower" is defined as a one-time fall of 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) or more in the WBC count or a cumulative fall of 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) or more within a period of three weeks.

Immediate discontinuation of LeponeX treatment: Immediate discontinuation of LeponeX treatment is mandatory if the WBC count is less than 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) or the ANC less than 1.5 x 10⁹/litre (1,500/mm³) during the first 18 weeks of therapy or if the WBC count is less than 2.5 x 10⁹/litre (2,500/mm³) or the ANC less than 1.0 x 10⁹/litre (1,000/mm³) after the first 18 weeks of treatment. WBC counts and differential blood counts must then be performed daily and the patient closely monitored for flu-like symptoms or other symptoms suggestive of infection. Following discontinuation of LeponeX, haematological evaluation must be continued until there is a return to baseline levels.

If possible, the patient should be admitted to a specialist haematology unit, where protective isolation and use of GM-CSF (granulocyte/macrophage colony-stimulating factor) or G-CSF (granulocyte colony-stimulating factor) may be indicated. It is recommended that treatment with colony-stimulating factor be stopped once the ANC has again risen above 1.0 x 10⁹/litre (1,000/mm³).

In the event of infection, antibiotic therapy must be initiated immediately due to the risk of septic shock.
Patients in whom LeponeX has been discontinued due to white blood cell deficiencies (see above) must not be re-exposed to LeponeX. It is recommended that the results of blood counts be confirmed by performing counts on two consecutive days. However, LeponeX should be discontinued after the first blood count.

LeponeX prescriptions must be marked "CBC" (= complete blood count) by the prescribing physician.
LeponeX must be discontinued in the event of an eosinophil count exceeding 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³); see "Adverse effects"; therapy should only be restarted after the eosinophil count has fallen below 1.0 x 10⁹/litre (1,000/mm³). In the event of thrombocytopenia (see "Adverse effects"), LeponeX should be discontinued if the platelet count falls below 50 x 10⁹/litre (50,000/mm³).

Other precautions
Cardiotoxicity
Patients with heart disease should be started on a low dose (1 x 12.5 mg on the first day). The dose increase should only be increased slowly and in small increments (see "Dosage/Administration"). Use in patients with severe cardiovascular disorders is contraindicated (see "Contraindications"). Patients with a history of heart disease or abnormal cardiac findings on physical examination should be referred to a specialist for further investigation, which should include an ECG (see "Contraindications").

Such patients should only receive LeponeX if the expected benefits clearly outweigh the risks. The treating physician should consider performing a pre-treatment ECG.
Orthostatic hypotension, with or without syncope, may occur during LeponeX therapy. In rare cases (approx. one in 3,000 patients), collapse may be profound and may be accompanied by cardiac and/or respiratory arrest and possible fatal outcome. Such events are most likely during the initial titration phase in association with rapid dose escalation. In isolated cases, they have even occurred after the first dose. Such complications seem to occur more frequently with concomitant use of benzodiazepines or other psychotropic agents (see "Interactions"). Close medical supervision is therefore necessary at the start of LeponeX therapy.

In patients diagnosed with cardiomyopathy while on LeponeX treatment, there is the risk of developing mitral valve incompetence. Mitral valve incompetence has been reported in cases of cardiomyopathy related to LeponeX treatment. These cases of mitral valve incompetence were mild or moderate in severity, detected on two-dimensional echocardiography (2D-ECG).
Monitoring of standing and supine blood pressure is necessary during the first weeks of treatment in patients with Parkinson's disease.

Resting tachycardia, accompanied by arrhythmia, dyspnoea or symptoms of heart failure, may occur in rare cases during the first two months of treatment and very rarely thereafter (see "Adverse effects"). If these symptoms occur, particularly during the titration period, diagnostic measures should be initiated as quickly as possible to rule out myocarditis. The symptoms of clozapine-induced myocarditis may also resemble those of myocardial infarction or influenza. There have also been reports of fatal cases of myocardial infarction. The assessment of causality was very difficult due to severe pre-existing cardiac disorders. If myocarditis or cardiomyopathy is suspected, LeponeX must be discontinued immediately and the patient referred to a cardiologist without delay.

The same signs and symptoms may also occur in the later stages of therapy and may then be associated with cardiomyopathy. In such cases, further investigation is indicated. If the diagnosis of cardiomyopathy is confirmed, LeponeX must be discontinued. Patients who have had clozapine-induced myocarditis or cardiomyopathy should not be re-exposed to clozapine.

Hyperglycaemia
Cases of diabetes mellitus, severe hyperglycaemia and even ketoacidosis or hyperosmolar coma have been reported, even in patients with no prior history of hyperglycaemia or diabetes mellitus. No causal relationship to LeponeX has been established, although blood glucose levels returned to normal in most patients following discontinuation of LeponeX. Re-exposure was positive in a small number of cases. The effect of LeponeX on glucose metabolism in patients with pre-existing diabetes mellitus has not been studied. Patients with diabetes mellitus starting on antipsychotic drugs should have their blood sugar levels regularly monitored. Patients with risk factors of diabetes mellitus (e.g. excess weight, a family history of diabetes) starting on atypical antipsychotic drugs should have their fasting blood sugar levels tested prior to and regularly during treatment. The possibility of impaired glucose tolerance should be considered in patients treated with LeponeX who develop hyperglycaemia with symptoms such as polydipsia, polyuria, polyphagia or weakness. Patients, who develop symptoms of hyperglycaemia during treatment with atypical antipsychotic drugs, should have their fasting blood sugar levels tested. In some cases, hyperglycaemia may return to normal after stopping treatment with atypical antipsychotic drugs. In other cases, hyperglycaemia may require further treatment despite stopping using atypical antipsychotic drugs. Discontinuation of LeponeX should be considered in patients with significant treatment-related hyperglycaemia.

Discontinuation of therapy for non-haematological reasons:
Patients who have been on LeponeX for longer than 18 weeks and have had their treatment interrupted for more than 3 days but less than 4 weeks should have their WBC count monitored weekly for an additional 6 weeks. Provided no abnormalities are found, monitoring at intervals not exceeding 4 weeks may be resumed. If LeponeX therapy has been interrupted for 4 weeks or longer, weekly monitoring is required for the next 18 weeks of therapy.

Low WBC count and ANC:
If, during the first 18 weeks of LeponeX therapy, the WBC count falls to between 3.5 x 10⁹/litre (3,500/mm³) and 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) and/or the ANC falls to between 2.0 x 10⁹/litre (2,000/mm³) and 1.5 x 10⁹/litre (1,500/mm³), haematological evaluations must be performed at least twice weekly. The same applies if, after 18 weeks of therapy, the values fall to between 3.0 x 10⁹/litre (3,000/mm³) and 2.5 x 10⁹/litre (2,500/mm³) for WBC count and to between 1.5 x 10⁹/litre (1,500/mm³) and 1.0 x 10⁹/litre (1,000/mm³) for ANC.

QT prolongation

As with other antipsychotic agents, caution is advised in patients with known cardiovascular disease or a family history of QT prolongation. As with other antipsychotic agents, caution is advised when prescribing LeponeX in conjunction with drugs known to increase the QTc interval.

Cerebrovascular events

An approximately 3-fold increase in the risk of cerebrovascular events has been seen in the dementia population with some atypical antipsychotic agents. The reason for this increased risk is not known. An increased risk cannot be ruled out for other antipsychotic agents or for other patient populations. LeponeX should therefore be used with particular caution in patients with risk factors for stroke.

Epilepsy

LeponeX may lower the seizure threshold. Patients with a history of epilepsy must be closely monitored during LeponeX therapy since dose-related seizures have been reported (see "Interactions"). In such cases, the dose should be reduced and, if necessary, anticonvulsant therapy initiated.

In patients with a history of seizures, treatment should be started with a single dose of 12.5 mg on the first day and the dose increase should be slow and in small increments (see "Dosage/Administration").
Some elderly patients may also be particularly susceptible to the anticholinergic effects of LeponeX (e.g. urinary retention and constipation).

Fever

During LeponeX therapy, patients may experience transient temperature elevations above 38°C, with the peak incidence in the first three weeks of treatment. This fever is generally benign. Occasionally, it may be associated with an increase or decrease in the WBC count. Patients with fever should be carefully evaluated to rule out the possibility of an underlying infection or the development of agranulocytosis. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) must be considered as a possible cause in patients presenting with high fever. If NMS is diagnosed, LeponeX treatment should be immediately stopped and the necessary therapeutic measures initiated. Immobilisation must be avoided since LeponeX may cause sedation and weight gain, thus increasing the risk of thromboembolism.

Rebound / withdrawal symptoms

If abrupt discontinuation of LeponeX treatment is required (e.g. leucopenia), patients should be carefully monitored for recurrence of psychotic symptoms and symptoms associated with cholinergic rebound such as sweating, headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Anticholinergic effects

LeponeX possesses anticholinergic properties, which may lead to adverse effects throughout the body. Close monitoring is therefore required in the presence of prostatic enlargement and narrow-angle glaucoma. On account of its anticholinergic properties, LeponeX may cause varying degrees of impairment to intestinal peristalsis, ranging from constipation to faecal impaction, intestinal obstruction and paralytic ileus. In rare occasions, these cases have been fatal (see "Adverse effects").

Interactions

Pharmacodynamic interactions
Drugs with substantial myelosuppressive potential should not be used concomitantly with LeponeX. Long-acting depot antipsychotics (which have myelosuppressive potential) should not be used concomitantly with LeponeX because these substances cannot be readily removed from the body if required, e.g. in the event of neutropenia (see "Special precautions" under "Warnings and precautions").
LeponeX may enhance the CNS effects of alcohol and MAO inhibitors as well as the CNS-depressant effects of narcotics, antihistamines and benzodiazepines. Fatalities have been reported for combinations of clozapine with such substances (including methadone).

Particular caution is advised when giving LeponeX concomitantly with benzodiazepines or other psychotropic agents as well as in patients who were using such drugs until only a few days before initiation of LeponeX therapy. In such cases, there is an increased risk of circulatory collapse, which, on rare occasions, can be profound and may lead to cardiac or respiratory arrest. It is not clear whether cardiac or respiratory collapse can be prevented by dose adjustment. Concomitant use of lithium or other CNS-acting drugs may increase the risk of neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS).

Due to the possibility of additive effects, particular caution is required when concomitantly administering drugs possessing anticholinergic, antihypertensive or respiratory-depressant properties.
Owing to its antihypertensive properties, LeponeX may reduce the pressor effect of noradrenaline or other predominantly alpha-adrenergic agents and may reverse the pressor effect of adrenaline.

LeponeX may lower the seizure threshold and adjustment of the antiepileptic dosage may therefore be necessary. There have been rare reports of severe epileptic seizures, including first occurrence of seizures and isolated cases of delirium when LeponeX was co-administered with valproic acid. These effects are possibly due to a pharmacodynamic interaction, the mechanism of which has not been determined.

LeponeX may increase plasma concentrations of highly protein-bound substances (e.g. warfarin and digoxin) due to its displacement from plasma proteins. If necessary, the dose of the protein-bound substance should be adjusted. As with other antipsychotic agents, caution is advised when prescribing LeponeX in conjunction with medicinal products known to increase the QTc interval or cause an electrolyte imbalance.

Pharmacokinetic interactions
Clozapine is a substrate for many CYP450 isoenzymes, in particular 3A4, 1A2 and 2D6. This should minimise the risk of metabolic interactions caused by an effect on an individual isozyme. Nonetheless, plasma clozapine levels should be closely monitored in patients receiving concomitant therapy with other drugs having an affinity for one or more of these enzymes.

Co-administration of substances that change these isoenzymes may lead to a rise or fall in plasma levels of clozapine and/or the co-administered substances. Theoretically, clozapine may cause an increase in plasma levels of tricyclic antidepressants, phenothiazines and type-1c antiarrhythmic agents known to bind to cytochrome P450 2D6. It may be necessary to prescribe lower doses. However, no clinically-relevant interactions have been reported so far. The combination of LeponeX with substances known to affect the activity of CYP450 isoenzymes may lead to a rise or fall in plasma levels of clozapine.

Special populations

Liver disease
Patients with stable pre-existing liver disease may receive LeponeX, but hepatic function must be regularly monitored. Liver function tests must be performed immediately in any patient developing symptoms of possible hepatic dysfunction (e.g. nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite) during LeponeX treatment. If the elevation of the values is clinically relevant or if symptoms of jaundice occur, treatment with LeponeX must be discontinued. It may only be resumed when the results of liver function tests return to normal. Close monitoring is necessary in such cases.

Renal disorders

Patients with mild to moderate renal impairment should be started on a low dose (1x 12.5 mg on the first day) (see "Dosage/Administration").
Elderly patients (> 60 years)
It is recommended that treatment be initiated at a lower dose in elderly patients (see "Dosage/Administration").

Orthostatic hypotension may occur in patients treated with LeponeX. There have been rare reports of tachycardia, which may be sustained. Elderly patients (>60 years), particularly those with impaired cardiovascular function, may be more susceptible than others to these effects.

Some elderly patients may also be particularly susceptible to the anticholinergic effects of LeponeX (e.g. urinary retention and constipation).

Psychosis/behavioural disorders in elderly patients with dementia
The risk of mortality was higher with atypical antipsychotic agents than with placebo in elderly patients (>60 years) with dementia-related psychosis/behavioural disorders. Analysis of 17 placebo-controlled studies showed a mortality risk in this patient population that was 1.6 to 1.7 times higher than with placebo. Risk factors for higher mortality with antipsychotic agents are: sedation, cardiovascular disease (e.g. arrhythmias, sudden cardiac death) or pulmonary disease (e.g. pneumonia, with or without aspiration). LeponeX is not approved for the treatment of psychosis/behavioural disorders in elderly patients (>60 years) with dementia.

Rebound / withdrawal symptoms
If abrupt discontinuation of LeponeX treatment is required (e.g. leucopenia), patients should be carefully monitored for recurrence of psychotic symptoms and symptoms associated with cholinergic rebound such as sweating, headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

Anticholinergic effects
LeponeX possesses anticholinergic properties, which may lead to adverse effects throughout the body. Close monitoring is therefore required in the presence of prostatic enlargement and narrow-angle glaucoma. On account of its anticholinergic properties, LeponeX may cause varying degrees of impairment to intestinal peristalsis, ranging from constipation to faecal impaction, intestinal obstruction and paralytic ileus. In rare occasions, these cases have been fatal (see "Adverse effects").

Interactions
Pharmacodynamic interactions
Drugs with substantial myelosuppressive potential should not be used concomitantly with LeponeX. Long-acting depot antipsychotics (which have myelosuppressive potential) should not be used concomitantly with LeponeX because these substances cannot be readily removed from the body if required, e.g. in the event of neutropenia (see "Special precautions" under "Warnings and precautions").
LeponeX may enhance the CNS effects of alcohol and MAO inhibitors as well as the CNS-depressant effects of narcotics, antihistamines and benzodiazepines. Fatalities have been reported for combinations of clozapine with such substances (including methadone).

Particular caution is advised when giving LeponeX concomitantly with benzodiazepines or other psychotropic agents as well as in patients who were using such drugs until only a few days before initiation of LeponeX therapy. In such cases, there is an increased risk of circulatory collapse, which, on rare occasions, can be profound and may lead to cardiac or respiratory arrest. It is not clear whether cardiac or respiratory collapse can be prevented by dose adjustment. Concomitant use of lithium or other CNS-acting drugs may increase the risk of neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS).

Due to the possibility of additive effects, particular caution is required when concomitantly administering drugs possessing anticholinergic, antihypertensive or respiratory-depressant properties.
Owing to its antihypertensive properties, LeponeX may reduce the pressor effect of noradrenaline or other predominantly alpha-adrenergic agents and may reverse the pressor effect of adrenaline.

LeponeX may lower the seizure threshold and adjustment of the antiepileptic dosage may therefore be necessary. There have been rare reports of severe epileptic seizures, including first occurrence of seizures and isolated cases of delirium when LeponeX was co-administered with valproic acid. These effects are possibly due to a pharmacodynamic interaction, the mechanism of which has not been determined.

LeponeX may increase plasma concentrations of highly protein-bound substances (e.g. warfarin and digoxin) due to its displacement from plasma proteins. If necessary, the dose of the protein-bound substance should be adjusted. As with other antipsychotic agents, caution is advised when prescribing LeponeX in conjunction with medicinal products known to increase the QTc interval or cause an electrolyte imbalance.

Pharmacokinetic interactions
Clozapine is a substrate for many CYP450 isoenzymes, in particular 3A4, 1A2 and 2D6. This should minimise the risk of metabolic interactions caused by an effect on an individual isozyme. Nonetheless, plasma clozapine levels should be closely monitored in patients receiving concomitant therapy with other drugs having an affinity for one or more of these enzymes.

Co-administration of substances that change these isoenzymes may lead to a rise or fall in plasma levels of clozapine and/or the co-administered substances. Theoretically, clozapine may cause an increase in plasma levels of tricyclic antidepressants, phenothiazines and type-1c antiarrhythmic agents known to bind to cytochrome P450 2D6. It may be necessary to prescribe lower doses. However, no clinically-relevant interactions have been reported so far. The combination of LeponeX with substances known to affect the activity of CYP450 isoenzymes may lead to a rise or fall in plasma levels of clozapine.

Interactions:

- The co-administration of enzyme inhibitors such as cimetidine (CYP1A2, 3A4 and 2D6 inhibitor) or erythromycin (CYP3A4 inhibitor), clarithromycin, azithromycin, fluvoxamine (1A2), perazine (1A2), ciprofloxacin (1A2) or oral contraceptives (1A2, 3A4, 2C19) with high doses of LeponeX has been associated with elevated plasma clozapine levels and the occurrence of adverse effects.

- There have been reports of increased plasma clozapine levels in patients who received the drug in combination with fluvoxamine (CYP3A4 and CYP1A2 inhibitor; up to ten-fold increase) or other selective serotonin reupt