FDA Approves GSK’s Platelet Drug for Hep C Patients

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The GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) platelet drug eltrombopag has received approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be used as a treatment for hepatitis C, Reuters reports.

Eltrombopag—branded as Promacta in the United States and Revolade elsewhere in the world—is approved in 88 countries to treat thrombocytopenia, a condition in which a person’s blood platelet count drops, often as a result of being attacked by his or her own immune system. This can cause uncontrolled bleeding or hemorrhaging.

Interferon—currently a critical element of hepatitis C treatment—is known to depress platelet counts, potentially resulting in thrombocytopenia. As a result, interferon-based therapy is contraindicated for people who already have low platelet counts. The additional indication for eltrombopag’s use will allow more people living with hepatitis C virus (HCV) to undergo a standard therapy for the liver disease.

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