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**Panic Disorder:** PAXIL is indicated for the treatment of panic disorder, with or without agoraphobia, as defined in DSM-IV. Panic disorder is characterized by the occurrence of unexpected panic attacks and associated concern about having additional attacks, worry about the implications or consequences of the attacks, and/or a significant change in behavior related to the attacks.

The efficacy of PAXIL was established in three 10- to 12-week trials in panic disorder patients whose diagnoses corresponded to the DSM-III-R category of panic disorder (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Clinical Trials).

Panic disorder (DSM-IV) is characterized by recurrent unexpected panic attacks, i.e., a discrete period of intense fear or discomfort in which 4 (or more) of the following symptoms develop abruptly and reach a peak within 10 minutes: (1) palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate; (2) sweating; (3) trembling or shaking; (4) sensations of shortness of breath or smothering; (5) feeling of choking; (6) chest pain or discomfort; (7) nausea or abdominal distress; (8) feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or faint; (9) derealization (feelings of unreality) or depersonalization (being detached from oneself); (10) fear of losing control; (11) fear of dying; (12) paresthesias (numbness or tingling sensations); (13) chills or hot flushes.

Long-term maintenance of efficacy was demonstrated in a 3-month relapse prevention trial. In this trial, patients with panic disorder assigned to paroxetine demonstrated a lower relapse rate compared to patients on placebo (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Clinical Trials). Nevertheless, the physician who prescribes PAXIL for extended periods should periodically re-evaluate the long-term usefulness of the drug for the individual patient.

**Social Anxiety Disorder:** PAXIL is indicated for the treatment of social anxiety disorder, also known as social phobia, as defined in DSM-IV (300.23). Social anxiety disorder is characterized by a marked and persistent fear of 1 or more social or performance situations in which the person is exposed to unfamiliar people or to possible scrutiny by others. Exposure to the feared situation almost invariably provokes anxiety, which may approach the intensity of a panic attack. The feared situations are avoided or endured with intense anxiety or distress. The avoidance, anxious anticipation, or distress in the feared situation(s) interferes significantly with the person's normal routine, occupational or academic functioning, or social activities or relationships, or there is marked distress about having the phobias. Lesser degrees of performance anxiety or shyness generally do not require psychopharmacological treatment.

The efficacy of PAXIL was established in three 12-week trials in adult patients with social anxiety disorder (DSM-IV). PAXIL has not been studied in children or adolescents with social phobia (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Clinical Trials).

The effectiveness of PAXIL in long-term treatment of social anxiety disorder, i.e., for more than 12 weeks, has not been systematically evaluated in adequate and well-controlled trials. Therefore, the physician who elects to prescribe PAXIL for extended periods should periodically

re-evaluate the long-term usefulness of the drug for the individual patient (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

**Generalized Anxiety Disorder:** PAXIL is indicated for the treatment of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), as defined in DSM-IV. Anxiety or tension associated with the stress of everyday life usually does not require treatment with an anxiolytic.

The efficacy of PAXIL in the treatment of GAD was established in two 8-week placebo-controlled trials in adults with GAD. PAXIL has not been studied in children or adolescents with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Clinical Trials).

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (DSM-IV) is characterized by excessive anxiety and worry (apprehensive expectation) that is persistent for at least 6 months and which the person finds difficult to control. It must be associated with at least 3 of the following 6 symptoms: Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge, being easily fatigued, difficulty concentrating or mind going blank, irritability, muscle tension, sleep disturbance.

The efficacy of PAXIL in maintaining a response in patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, who responded during an 8-week acute treatment phase while taking PAXIL and were then observed for relapse during a period of up to 24 weeks, was demonstrated in a placebo-controlled trial (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Clinical Trials). Nevertheless, the physician who elects to use PAXIL for extended periods should periodically re-evaluate the long-term usefulness of the drug for the individual patient (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder:** PAXIL is indicated for the treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The efficacy of PAXIL in the treatment of PTSD was established in two 12-week placebo-controlled trials in adults with PTSD (DSM-IV) (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY—Clinical Trials).

PTSD, as defined by DSM-IV, requires exposure to a traumatic event that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or threat to the physical integrity of self or others, and a response that involves intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Symptoms that occur as a result of exposure to the traumatic event include reexperiencing of the event in the form of intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, or dreams, and intense psychological distress and physiological reactivity on exposure to cues to the event; avoidance of situations reminiscent of the traumatic event, inability to recall details of the event, and/or numbing of general responsiveness manifested as diminished interest in significant activities, estrangement from others, restricted range of affect, or sense of foreshortened future; and symptoms of autonomic arousal including hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, sleep disturbance, impaired concentration, and irritability or outbursts of anger. A PTSD diagnosis requires that the symptoms are present for at least a month and that they cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

The efficacy of PAXIL in longer-term treatment of PTSD, i.e., for more than 12 weeks, has not been systematically evaluated in placebo-controlled trials. Therefore, the physician who elects to prescribe PAXIL for extended periods should periodically re-evaluate the long-term usefulness of the drug for the individual patient (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

#### CONTRAINDICATIONS

Concomitant use in patients taking either monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) or thioridazine is contraindicated (see WARNINGS and PRECAUTIONS).

Concomitant use in patients taking pimozide is contraindicated (see PRECAUTIONS).

PAXIL is contraindicated in patients with a hypersensitivity to paroxetine or any of the inactive ingredients in PAXIL.

#### WARNINGS

**Clinical Worsening and Suicide Risk:** Patients with major depressive disorder (MDD), both adult and pediatric, may experience worsening of their depression and/or the emergence of suicidal ideation and behavior (suicidality) or unusual changes in behavior, whether or not they are taking antidepressant medications, and this risk may persist until significant remission occurs. There has been a long-standing concern that antidepressants may have a role in inducing worsening of depression and the emergence of suicidality in certain patients. Antidepressants increased the risk of suicidal thinking and behavior (suicidality) in short-term studies in children and adolescents with Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and other psychiatric disorders.

Pooled analyses of short-term placebo-controlled trials of 9 antidepressant drugs (SSRIs and others) in children and adolescents with MDD, OCD, or other psychiatric disorders (a total of 24 trials involving over 4,400 patients) have revealed a greater risk of adverse events representing suicidal behavior or thinking (suicidality) during the first few months of treatment in those receiving antidepressants. The average risk of such events in patients receiving antidepressants was 4%, twice the placebo risk of 2%. There was considerable variation in risk among drugs, but a tendency toward an increase for almost all drugs studied. The risk of suicidality was most consistently observed in the MDD trials, but there were signals of risk arising from some trials in other psychiatric indications (obsessive compulsive disorder and social anxiety disorder) as well. **No suicides occurred in any of these trials.** It is unknown whether the suicidality risk in pediatric patients extends to longer-term use, i.e., beyond several months. It is also unknown whether the suicidality risk extends to adults.

**All pediatric patients being treated with antidepressants for any indication should be observed closely for clinical worsening, suicidality, and unusual changes in behavior, especially during the initial few months of a course of drug therapy, or at times of dose changes, either increases or decreases. Such observation would generally include at least weekly face-to-face contact with patients or their family members or caregivers during the first 4 weeks of treatment, then every other week visits for the next 4 weeks, then at 12 weeks, and as clinically indicated beyond 12 weeks. Additional contact by telephone may be appropriate between face-to-face visits.**

**Adults with MDD or co-morbid depression in the setting of other psychiatric illness being treated with antidepressants should be observed similarly for clinical worsening and suicidality, especially during the initial few months of a course of drug therapy, or at times of dose changes, either increases or decreases.**

**In addition, patients with a history of suicidal behavior or thoughts, those patients exhibiting a significant degree of suicidal ideation prior to commencement of treatment, and young adults, are at an increased risk of suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts, and should receive careful monitoring during treatment.**

The following symptoms, anxiety, agitation, panic attacks, insomnia, irritability, hostility, aggressiveness, impulsivity, akathisia (psychomotor restlessness), hypomania, and mania, have been reported in adult and pediatric patients being treated with antidepressants for major depressive disorder as well as for other indications, both psychiatric and nonpsychiatric. Although a causal link between the emergence of such symptoms and either the worsening of depression and/or the emergence of suicidal impulses has not been established, there is concern that such symptoms may represent precursors to emerging suicidality.

Consideration should be given to changing the therapeutic regimen, including possibly discontinuing the medication, in patients whose depression is persistently worse, or who are experiencing emergent suicidality or symptoms that might be precursors to worsening depression or suicidality, especially if these symptoms are severe, abrupt in onset, or were not part of the patient's presenting symptoms.

If the decision has been made to discontinue treatment, medication should be tapered, as rapidly as is feasible, but with recognition that abrupt discontinuation can be associated with certain symptoms (see PRECAUTIONS and DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION—Discontinuation of Treatment With PAXIL, for a description of the risks of discontinuation of PAXIL).

**Families and caregivers of pediatric patients being treated with antidepressants for major depressive disorder or other indications, both psychiatric and nonpsychiatric, should be alerted about the need to monitor patients for the emergence of agitation, irritability, unusual changes in behavior, and the other symptoms described above, as well as the emergence of suicidality, and to report such symptoms immediately to health care providers. Such monitoring should include daily observation by families and caregivers. Prescriptions for PAXIL should be written for the smallest quantity of tablets consistent with good patient management, in order to reduce the risk of overdose. Families and caregivers of adults being treated for depression should be similarly advised.**

**Screening Patients for Bipolar Disorder:** A major depressive episode may be the initial presentation of bipolar disorder. It is generally believed (though not established in controlled trials) that treating such an episode with an antidepressant alone may increase the likelihood of precipitation of a mixed/manic episode in patients at risk for bipolar disorder. Whether any of the symptoms described above represent such a conversion is unknown. However, prior to initiating treatment with an antidepressant, patients with depressive symptoms should be adequately

screened to determine if they are at risk for bipolar disorder; such screening should include a detailed psychiatric history, including a family history of suicide, bipolar disorder, and depression. It should be noted that PAXIL is not approved for use in treating bipolar depression.

**Potential for Interaction With Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors:** In patients receiving another serotonin reuptake inhibitor drug in combination with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), there have been reports of serious, sometimes fatal, reactions including hyperthermia, rigidity, myoclonus, autonomic instability with possible rapid fluctuations of vital signs, and mental status changes that include extreme agitation progressing to delirium and coma. These reactions have also been reported in patients who have recently discontinued that drug and have been started on an MAOI. Some cases presented with features resembling neuroleptic malignant syndrome. While there are no human data showing such an interaction with PAXIL, limited animal data on the effects of combined use of paroxetine and MAOIs suggest that these drugs may act synergistically to elevate blood pressure and evoke behavioral excitation. Therefore, it is recommended that PAXIL not be used in combination with an MAOI, or within 14 days of discontinuing treatment with an MAOI. At least 2 weeks should be allowed after stopping PAXIL before starting an MAOI.

**Potential Interaction With Thioridazine:** Thioridazine administration alone produces prolongation of the QTc interval, which is associated with serious ventricular arrhythmias, such as torsade de pointes–type arrhythmias, and sudden death. This effect appears to be dose related.

An in vivo study suggests that drugs which inhibit CYP2D6, such as paroxetine, will elevate plasma levels of thioridazine. Therefore, it is recommended that paroxetine not be used in combination with thioridazine (see CONTRAINDICATIONS and PRECAUTIONS).

**Usage in Pregnancy: Teratogenic Effects:** Epidemiological studies have shown that infants born to women who had first trimester paroxetine exposure had an increased risk of cardiovascular malformations, primarily ventricular and atrial septal defects (VSDs and ASDs). In general, septal defects range from those that are symptomatic and may require surgery to those that are asymptomatic and may resolve spontaneously. If a patient becomes pregnant while taking paroxetine, she should be advised of the potential harm to the fetus. Unless the benefits of paroxetine to the mother justify continuing treatment, consideration should be given to either discontinuing paroxetine therapy or switching to another antidepressant (see PRECAUTIONS—Discontinuation of Treatment with PAXIL). For women who intend to become pregnant or are in their first trimester of pregnancy, paroxetine should only be initiated after consideration of the other available treatment options.

A study based on Swedish national registry data evaluated infants of 6,896 women exposed to antidepressants in early pregnancy (5,123 women exposed to SSRIs; including 815 for paroxetine). Infants exposed to paroxetine in early pregnancy had an increased risk of cardiovascular malformations (primarily VSDs and ASDs) compared to the entire registry

population (OR 1.8; 95% confidence interval 1.1-2.8). The rate of cardiovascular malformations following early pregnancy paroxetine exposure was 2% vs. 1% in the entire registry population. Among the same paroxetine exposed infants, an examination of the data showed no increase in the overall risk for congenital malformations.

A separate retrospective cohort study using US United Healthcare data evaluated 5,956 infants of mothers dispensed paroxetine or other antidepressants during the first trimester (n = 815 for paroxetine). This study showed a trend towards an increased risk for cardiovascular malformations for paroxetine compared to other antidepressants (OR 1.5; 95% confidence interval 0.8-2.9). The prevalence of cardiovascular malformations following first trimester dispensing was 1.5% for paroxetine vs. 1% for other antidepressants. Nine out of 12 infants with cardiovascular malformations whose mothers were dispensed paroxetine in the first trimester had VSDs. This study also suggested an increased risk of overall major congenital malformations (inclusive of the cardiovascular defects) for paroxetine compared to other antidepressants (OR 1.8; 95% confidence interval 1.2-2.8). The prevalence of all congenital malformations following first trimester exposure was 4% for paroxetine vs. 2% for other antidepressants.

**Animal Findings:** Reproduction studies were performed at doses up to 50 mg/kg/day in rats and 6 mg/kg/day in rabbits administered during organogenesis. These doses are approximately 8 (rat) and 2 (rabbit) times the MRHD on an mg/m<sup>2</sup> basis. These studies have revealed no evidence of teratogenic effects. However, in rats, there was an increase in pup deaths during the first 4 days of lactation when dosing occurred during the last trimester of gestation and continued throughout lactation. This effect occurred at a dose of 1 mg/kg/day or approximately one-sixth of the MRHD on an mg/m<sup>2</sup> basis. The no-effect dose for rat pup mortality was not determined. The cause of these deaths is not known.

**Nonteratogenic Effects:** Neonates exposed to PAXIL and other SSRIs or serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), late in the third trimester have developed complications requiring prolonged hospitalization, respiratory support, and tube feeding. Such complications can arise immediately upon delivery. Reported clinical findings have included respiratory distress, cyanosis, apnea, seizures, temperature instability, feeding difficulty, vomiting, hypoglycemia, hypotonia, hypertonia, hyperreflexia, tremor, jitteriness, irritability, and constant crying. These features are consistent with either a direct toxic effect of SSRIs and SNRIs or, possibly, a drug discontinuation syndrome. It should be noted that, in some cases, the clinical picture is consistent with serotonin syndrome (see WARNINGS—Potential for Interaction With Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors).

There have also been postmarketing reports of premature births in pregnant women exposed to paroxetine or other SSRIs.

When treating a pregnant woman with paroxetine during the third trimester, the physician should carefully consider the potential risks and benefits of treatment (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

## PRECAUTIONS

**General: Activation of Mania/Hypomania:** During premarketing testing, hypomania or mania occurred in approximately 1.0% of unipolar patients treated with PAXIL compared to 1.1% of active-control and 0.3% of placebo-treated unipolar patients. In a subset of patients classified as bipolar, the rate of manic episodes was 2.2% for PAXIL and 11.6% for the combined active-control groups. As with all drugs effective in the treatment of major depressive disorder, PAXIL should be used cautiously in patients with a history of mania.

**Seizures:** During premarketing testing, seizures occurred in 0.1% of patients treated with PAXIL, a rate similar to that associated with other drugs effective in the treatment of major depressive disorder. PAXIL should be used cautiously in patients with a history of seizures. It should be discontinued in any patient who develops seizures.

**Discontinuation of Treatment With PAXIL:** Recent clinical trials supporting the various approved indications for PAXIL employed a taper-phase regimen, rather than an abrupt discontinuation of treatment. The taper-phase regimen used in GAD and PTSD clinical trials involved an incremental decrease in the daily dose by 10 mg/day at weekly intervals. When a daily dose of 20 mg/day was reached, patients were continued on this dose for 1 week before treatment was stopped.

With this regimen in those studies, the following adverse events were reported at an incidence of 2% or greater for PAXIL and were at least twice that reported for placebo: Abnormal dreams, paresthesia, and dizziness. In the majority of patients, these events were mild to moderate and were self-limiting and did not require medical intervention.

During marketing of PAXIL and other SSRIs and SNRIs, there have been spontaneous reports of adverse events occurring, upon the discontinuation of these drugs (particularly when abrupt), including the following: Dysphoric mood, irritability, agitation, dizziness, sensory disturbances (e.g., paresthesias such as electric shock sensations and tinnitus), anxiety, confusion, headache, lethargy, emotional lability, insomnia, and hypomania. While these events are generally self-limiting, there have been reports of serious discontinuation symptoms.

Patients should be monitored for these symptoms when discontinuing treatment with PAXIL. A gradual reduction in the dose rather than abrupt cessation is recommended whenever possible. If intolerable symptoms occur following a decrease in the dose or upon discontinuation of treatment, then resuming the previously prescribed dose may be considered. Subsequently, the physician may continue decreasing the dose but at a more gradual rate (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

See also PRECAUTIONS—Pediatric Use, for adverse events reported upon discontinuation of treatment with PAXIL in pediatric patients.

**Akathisia:** The use of paroxetine or other SSRIs has been associated with the development of akathisia, which is characterized by an inner sense of restlessness and psychomotor agitation such as an inability to sit or stand still usually associated with subjective distress. This is most likely to occur within the first few weeks of treatment.

**Hyponatremia:** Several cases of hyponatremia have been reported. The hyponatremia appeared to be reversible when PAXIL was discontinued. The majority of these occurrences have been in elderly individuals, some in patients taking diuretics or who were otherwise volume depleted.

**Serotonin Syndrome:** The development of a serotonin syndrome may occur in association with treatment with paroxetine, particularly with concomitant use of serotonergic drugs and with drugs which may have impaired metabolism of paroxetine. Symptoms have included agitation, confusion, diaphoresis, hallucinations, hyperreflexia, myoclonus, shivering, tachycardia, and tremor. The concomitant use of PAXIL with serotonin precursors (such as tryptophan) is not recommended (see WARNINGS—Potential for Interaction with Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors and PRECAUTIONS—Drug Interactions).

**Abnormal Bleeding:** Published case reports have documented the occurrence of bleeding episodes in patients treated with psychotropic agents that interfere with serotonin reuptake. Subsequent epidemiological studies, both of the case-control and cohort design, have demonstrated an association between use of psychotropic drugs that interfere with serotonin reuptake and the occurrence of upper gastrointestinal bleeding. In 2 studies, concurrent use of a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) or aspirin potentiated the risk of bleeding (see Drug Interactions). Although these studies focused on upper gastrointestinal bleeding, there is reason to believe that bleeding at other sites may be similarly potentiated. Patients should be cautioned regarding the risk of bleeding associated with the concomitant use of paroxetine with NSAIDs, aspirin, or other drugs that affect coagulation.

**Use in Patients With Concomitant Illness:** Clinical experience with PAXIL in patients with certain concomitant systemic illness is limited. Caution is advisable in using PAXIL in patients with diseases or conditions that could affect metabolism or hemodynamic responses.

As with other SSRIs, mydriasis has been infrequently reported in premarketing studies with PAXIL. A few cases of acute angle closure glaucoma associated with paroxetine therapy have been reported in the literature. As mydriasis can cause acute angle closure in patients with narrow angle glaucoma, caution should be used when PAXIL is prescribed for patients with narrow angle glaucoma.

PAXIL has not been evaluated or used to any appreciable extent in patients with a recent history of myocardial infarction or unstable heart disease. Patients with these diagnoses were excluded from clinical studies during the product's premarket testing. Evaluation of electrocardiograms of 682 patients who received PAXIL in double-blind, placebo-controlled trials, however, did not indicate that PAXIL is associated with the development of significant ECG abnormalities. Similarly, PAXIL does not cause any clinically important changes in heart rate or blood pressure.

Increased plasma concentrations of paroxetine occur in patients with severe renal impairment (creatinine clearance <30 mL/min.) or severe hepatic impairment. A lower starting dose should be used in such patients (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).