RECOMMENDED DOSING:
Adults (not approved in patients less than 17 years of age):
Tolerability is improved by a slow titration regimen. The manufacturer recommends the following:
• Start with 25mg q day (at bedtime).
• Titrate in 25mg increments as separate doses every 3 days to 25mg q.i.d.
• Thereafter, increase the daily dose by 50mg every 3 days to 50mg q.i.d.
• After titration, 50mg to 100mg may be given q 4 to 6 hours pm, not to exceed 400mg/day.

Impaired renal function: In patients with CrCl < 30ml/min, adjust dosing interval to q 12 hours; max dose should not exceed 200mg/day. Dialysis patients can receive their dose on dialysis days.

Impaired liver function: In patients, with cirrhosis, dose should be adjusted to 50mg q 12hours.

The Elderly: In patients over 65, titrate more cautiously. In patients over 75, max dose is 300mg.

Discontinuation: Withdrawal symptoms may occur if tramadol is discontinued abruptly. Symptoms may include anxiety, sweating, insomnia, rigors, pain, nausea, tremors, diarrhea, upper respiratory symptoms, piloerection, and rarely hallucination. Clinical experience suggests that withdrawal symptoms may be relieved by tapering the dose.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:
May be beneficial in patients with:
2. a contraindication to NSAIDs
3. fibromyalgia
4. mixed somatic / neuropathic pain

IMPORTANT NOTES CONCERNING POTENTIAL DEPENDENCE & ABUSE:
Tramadol may induce psychic and physical dependence of the morphine (μ-opioid) type, thus should not be used in patients that are currently opioid-dependent. Methadone is a reasonable alternative.

Tramadol has been associated with craving, drug-seeking behavior, and development of tolerance. Tramadol has been shown to reinitiate physical dependence in some patients that have been previously dependent on other opioids.

Dependence and abuse, including drug-seeking behavior & taking illicit action to obtain the drug, are not limited to those patients with prior history of opioid dependence.

FDA-APPROVED USES:
Moderate to moderately-severe pain in adults.

P&T RESTRICTIONS:
As of March, 2004, tramadol is no longer restricted to specific services.
P&T has restricted the prescribing quantities of tramadol to the FDA-approved maximums for safety reasons. The maximum daily dose is 400mg. In patients receiving an SSRI, use extreme caution, titrate more slowly and do not exceed a maximum of 300mg.

REFERENCES:
1. Ultram® package insert. Ortho-McNeil; last revision August 2001