National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Health Technology Appraisal
Corticosteroids for the treatment of chronic asthma in adults and children aged 12 years and over

Royal College of Nursing

Introduction

With a membership of over 395,000 registered nurses, midwives, health visitors, nursing students, health care assistants and nurse cadets, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the voice of nursing across the UK and the largest professional union of nursing staff in the world. RCN members work in a variety of hospital and community settings in the NHS and the independent sector. The RCN promotes patient and nursing interests on a wide range of issues by working closely with the Government, the UK parliaments and other national and European political institutions, trade unions, professional bodies and voluntary organisations.

The RCN welcomes to opportunity to review this document.

Response to the Appraisal Consultation Document on the use of Corticosteroids for the treatment of chronic asthma in adults and children aged 12 years and over.

We welcome this document and consider it comprehensive. We would like to add the following comments:

Section 1.4: MDI and spacer is often the first choice but we agree that not everyone can use them. A dried powder may be better.

Section 2.6: We consider that the last sentence needs more emphasis on the need for stepping down of treatment when necessary.

Section 2.7: Data on the numbers of patients/percentages at each step would be useful.

Section 3.5: As CFCs containing products are being phased out, should we be advising that they are cheaper? The patient will only have to be changed off them.

Section 4.3.5: We agree that stepping down would be useful.

In general, we welcome the patient choice and usability element of this health technology rather than the cheapest option. Clinician's choice is also important.

There does not seem to be any mention of having steroid warning cards at the higher doses of ICS. We suggest that this be added.