

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Topotecan for the second-line treatment of small cell lung cancer-comments

Royal College of Nursing

Introduction

With a membership of over 400,000 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.

RCN – Evidence submission

We agree with the final scope statement that current management for second line treatment of small cell lung cancer usually consists of combination chemotherapy regimens. We also agree that the median survival with such cytotoxic treatment is approximately 14 to 18 months for limited disease and 9 to 12 months for extensive disease and that radiotherapy may be given concurrently with chemotherapy or as part of palliative care and that surgery is only suitable for a small minority of patients with no evidence of local spread or metastasis.

We are not aware of any significant geographical variation in current practice or difference in opinion between professionals as to what current practice should be with the use of this health technology.

2nd line chemotherapy with CAV and best supportive care are the current alternatives.

The technology is currently used in Primary/secondary care settings.

Additional professional input may be required to administer intravenous Topotecan - patients will require daily infusions for 5 days every 21 days i.e. 4 additional infusions each cycle. For oral Topotecan - patients may be able to administer at home.

Once advised on how to administer these, patients will be able to administer their medication.