

18th September 2009

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Adam Reeves-Brown
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence,
Mid City Place,
71 High Holborn,
London, WC1V 6NA.

Dear Mr Reeves-Brown,

Technology Appraisal – Lung Cancer (non small cell, first line) - Gefitinib

This submission, on behalf of The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, is made in response to your call for submissions on this Technology Appraisal.

The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation (RCLCF)

RCLCF is the only UK wide charity, dedicated solely to the defeat of lung cancer. It funds basic science research, tobacco control initiatives and work in lung cancer patient information, support and advocacy. The Foundation, through its network of lung cancer patient groups, its information helpline, its Patient Advisory Board and Annual Patient Meeting, is well placed to collect the views of lung cancer patients. Ensuring equitable access to best treatment is of clear and obvious importance.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is the UK's most common cause of cancer death for both men and women, responsible for nearly a quarter (24%) of all male cancer deaths and a fifth (20%) of all female cancer deaths. Each year more than 38,000 people are diagnosed with lung cancer in the UK (more than 100 people each day). Non small cell lung cancer (nsclc) accounts for around 90% of patients diagnosed with lung cancer.

Although a common cancer, outcomes of treatment are generally poor, with only 7% of lung cancer patients surviving five years after diagnosis. Long term survival has only improved slightly in recent years.

Sadly, the vast majority of lung cancer patients are diagnosed when the disease is in the advanced stage and curative treatment is not an option. Many of the symptoms of this disease (such as weight loss, breathlessness and cough) are very difficult to manage medically. There is a real need for new and innovative approaches to improving the quality of patients lives and to extending lives.

Gefitinib

The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and its patients do not have access to additional research data on the use of Gefitinib, beyond that already in the public domain. It does however, have a number of anecdotal cases, where Gefitinib has been of considerable benefit to individual patients.

This product does represent a new modality of treatment for a segmented group of nsclc patients. It has few and generally milder side effects (rash, diarrhoea), as compared with conventional chemotherapy. It is given in tablet form (a clear advantage for the appropriate patient group). It therefore offers a real option for some patients and as such, we strongly urge the Appraisal Committee to recommend this treatment.

If you require further information please contact us at the address above.

Yours sincerely,

