



**National Institute for
Health and Clinical Excellence**

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PRESS RELEASE

NICE guidance extends recommendations on Alzheimer's drugs

NICE has today (23 March 2011) issued updated guidance to the NHS on the use of four drugs to help manage Alzheimer's disease.

The updated guidance extends previous recommendations for the use of three drugs - Donepezil (Aricept, Eisai/Pfizer), galantamine (Reminyl, Shire) and rivastigmine (Exelon, Novartis) - to include mild, as well as moderate Alzheimer's disease. It also recommends the use of memantine (Ebixa, Lundbeck) for severe disease and for some patients with moderate disease.

This new appraisal reviews recommendations made in Technology Appraisal 111 published in September 2007. Because this is final, published guidance, the NHS now has a legal obligation to provide funding for this treatment within three months so that eligible patients can begin receiving these drugs.

Chief Executive, Sir Andrew Dillon said: "These updated recommendations have now been issued to the NHS, this means that donepezil, rivastigmine and galantamine will be made available to people with both mild as well as moderate Alzheimer's disease. Memantine will also be available to those with moderate or severe Alzheimer's. We are pleased to be able to extend the recommendations made in 2007 - clinical trials have continued to show the positive effects of these drugs and, in the case of memantine, have reduced the uncertainty about its clinical effectiveness. We also have more information about the costs of living with and treating the disease, as it progresses through its mild, moderate and severe stages."

Ends

Notes to Editors

About the appraisal

1. The guidance will be available from 23 March 2011 at: www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA217.
2. NICE published its first draft guidance on this appraisal in October 2010. Following consultation on that draft, the recommendations remain unchanged. No appeals were received at final draft stage.
3. Donepezil (Aricept, Eisai/Pfizer), galantamine (Reminyl, Shire) and rivastigmine (Exelon, Novartis) are recommended within their licensed indications for mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease as options for managing Alzheimer's disease. Memantine (Ebixa, Lundbeck) is recommended as an option in managing Alzheimer's disease for people with moderate Alzheimer's disease who are intolerant of or have a contraindication to AChE inhibitors, or people with severe Alzheimer's disease.

About NICE

4. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance and standards on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health
5. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - **public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
 - **health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments, medical technologies (including devices and diagnostics) and procedures within the NHS
 - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.
6. NICE produces standards for patient care:
 - **quality standards** – these reflect the very best in high quality patient care, to help healthcare practitioners and commissioners of care deliver excellent services
 - **Quality and Outcomes Framework** – NICE develops the clinical and health improvement indicators in the QOF, the Department of Health scheme which rewards GPs for how well they care for patients
7. NICE provides advice and support on putting NICE guidance and standards into practice through its **implementation programme**, and it collates and accredits high quality health guidance, research and information to help health professionals deliver the best patient care through **NHS Evidence**.