

PRESS RELEASE

NICE issues guidance on the use of erlotinib for the treatment of non-small-cell lung cancer

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today (26 November) published final guidance on the use of erlotinib for the treatment of non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC). The guidance recommends erlotinib as an alternative to docetaxel for people who have already tried one chemotherapy regimen but it has not worked. Erlotinib should be used only when it is provided by the manufacturer on the basis that the overall treatment costs of the drug are the same as those of docetaxel. Treatment costs include administration, treating side effects and monitoring.

The decision to use erlotinib or docetaxel should be made after a discussion between the patient and their clinician about the potential benefits and side effects of each treatment. The guidance does not recommend erlotinib for the second-line treatment of locally advanced or metastatic NSCLC in patients who are intolerant of docetaxel, or for whom docetaxel is contraindicated, or for third-line treatment after docetaxel therapy.

Professor Peter Littlejohns, Clinical and Public Health Director and Executive Lead for this guidance said: “The manufacturer of erlotinib, Roche Products Limited, proposed an arrangement making the drug available to the NHS in England and Wales on a discounted basis. This means that the cost of treating a patient with erlotinib would be the same as treating them with docetaxel, the standard treatment option. The Department of Health in England and the Department of Health and Social Services in Wales have accepted this proposed arrangement and after consideration by the independent Appraisal Committee, erlotinib is recommended as an alternative to docetaxel as a second-line treatment option.

“Because erlotinib is given in tablet form, patients spend less time in hospital receiving treatment. This guidance is therefore good news for lung cancer patients who have already tried one chemotherapy regimen that has not worked.”

Ends

For more information call the NICE press office on 0845 003 7782 or 07775 583 813.

Notes to Editors

About the guidance

1. Information on this appraisal can be found on the NICE website at - <http://www.nice.org.uk/TA162>

About NICE

2. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.
3. 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 and procedures within the NHS
 - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.