



**National Institute for  
Health and Clinical Excellence**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **NICE guidance recommends lenalidomide for multiple myeloma**

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today (18 June) published final guidance on the use of lenalidomide for multiple myeloma in people who have received at least one prior therapy.

The new NICE guidance recommends lenalidomide in combination with dexamethasone as a treatment option for people with multiple myeloma who have received two or more prior therapies. The cost of the drug beyond 26 cycles (each of 28 days; normally a period of 2 years) will be met by the manufacturer, Celgene. For those patients who have not received two or more prior therapies, but are currently receiving lenalidomide, the independent Appraisal Committee has recommended they have the option to continue treatment until they and their clinician consider it appropriate to stop.

**Professor Peter Littlejohns, Clinical and Public Health Director at NICE said:**

“Multiple myeloma is a type of cancer that develops from cells in the bone marrow and there is currently no cure for the disease, only treatments to stop the progress of the condition and help relieve symptoms. It is an uncommon cancer, with less than 4000 new cases per year in the UK.

“Following a proposal from the manufacturer of lenalidomide, where they bear the costs of the drug beyond 26 cycles (normally for a period of 2 years), the independent Appraisal Committee was able to recommend lenalidomide as treatment option for multiple myeloma in people who have received two or more prior therapies. The Committee also accepted that lenalidomide fitted NICE’s criteria for allowing its advisory bodies greater flexibility when making recommendations on the use of end of life treatments.

“NICE already recommended bortezomib (Velcade) in October 2007 under a risk sharing scheme for patients who are experiencing their first relapse and publication of this new NICE guidance is good news for patients who have already tried other chemotherapy regimens.”

## Ends

## Notes to Editors

### About the guidance

1. The guidance is available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/TA171> (from 18 June).
2. Lenalidomide 25 mg capsules cost £4368 per 21 capsules (excluding VAT; ‘British national formulary’ [BNF] edition 55). Dosage is continued or modified based upon clinical and laboratory findings. For example, if lenalidomide is continued for ten 28-day cycles without dose reduction, the cost would be £43,680. Costs may vary in different settings because of negotiated procurement discounts.
3. In October 2007, NICE recommended bortezomib (Velcade) under a risk sharing scheme for patients who are experiencing their first relapse, which enables those with multiple myeloma to have access to the drug when they are most likely to benefit from treatment. NICE technology appraisal guidance 129 - <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA129>
4. Following the BBC documentary *The Price of Life* broadcast on 17 June, NICE has published guidance on the use of lenalidomide for multiple myeloma on its website ahead of the scheduled publication date. The guidance will be formally issued to the NHS when NICE launches other guidance on 24 June 2009. Accordingly, the Secretary of State’s direction requiring NHS organisations to make funding available for NICE recommended treatments within 3 months of final guidance being published will begin on 24 June.

### About NICE

5. 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.
6. 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.