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PRESS RELEASE

NICE issues guidance on the use of myocardial perfusion scintigraphy for the diagnosis and management of coronary artery disease

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today issued guidance to the NHS in England and Wales to recommend the use of myocardial perfusion scintigraphy (MPS) using single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) in the diagnosis and management of coronary artery disease (CAD).

NICE has recommended that the use of SPECT should be directed initially to patient groups for whom the technology provides the greatest additional benefit in terms of initial diagnosis of CAD and in the management of those with established CAD. Therefore, the NICE guidance recommends that MPS using SPECT should be used in the following circumstances:

- As the initial diagnostic tool for people with suspected CAD for whom stress electrocardiography (sECG) poses particular problems of poor sensitivity or difficulties in interpretation, including women, people with cardiac conduction defects and people with diabetes, and for people who are unable to perform treadmill exercise.

- As part of an investigational strategy for the diagnosis of suspected CAD in people with lower likelihood of CAD and future cardiac events, and in the management of established CAD in people who remain symptomatic following myocardial infarction (MI) or reperfusion interventions.

Andrea Sutcliffe, planning and resources director and executive lead for the appraisal said: “In order for the NHS to deliver this effective option to patients across

England and Wales, there will need to be an implementation strategy, which takes into account investment in new equipment and development of staff expertise."

MPS involving SPECT produces more detailed information about the heart's function than conventional ECG or coronary angiography. The procedure involves the intravenous injection of small amounts of a radioactive tracer to evaluate perfusion of living cardiac muscle via the coronary arteries. Cross-sectional images of the heart, similar to those produced by conventional CT scanning, are taken by means of a camera which rotates around the patient to detect the distribution of tracer within the heart.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Q&A's and further information

A Q&A document is available to support this press release. If you received this press release by e-mail it is attached. If you would like to receive a copy by e-mail or fax - please contact NICE on the numbers above. The full guidance is available on the NICE website at http://www.nice.org.uk/Docref.asp?d=94602

About the NICE guidance

1. NICE follows a process which allows consultees including patients and health professionals to submit evidence, nominate their own experts, be consulted on draft guidance and appeal if they feel the guidance is perverse, that NICE has exceeded its powers or if NICE has not followed the published process for its work.

About NICE

2. NICE is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatments and care for those using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit www.nice.org.uk.
3. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
    - the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales – technology appraisals
    - the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales – clinical guidelines.
    - whether interventional procedures used for diagnosis or treatment are safe enough and work well enough for routine use– interventional procedures.

4. NICE also funds three enquiries that undertake research into the way patients are treated to identify ways of improving the quality of care (the investigations are known as confidential enquiries).
5. NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.