

Quick reference guide

Rituximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis

1 Guidance

- 1.1 Rituximab in combination with methotrexate is recommended as an option for the treatment of adults with severe active rheumatoid arthritis who have had an inadequate response to or intolerance of other disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), including treatment with at least one tumour necrosis factor α (TNF- α) inhibitor therapy.
- 1.2 Treatment with rituximab plus methotrexate should be continued only if there is an adequate response following initiation of therapy. An adequate response is defined as an improvement in disease activity score (DAS28) of 1.2 points or more. Repeat courses of treatment with rituximab plus methotrexate should be given no more frequently than every 6 months.
- 1.3 Treatment with rituximab plus methotrexate should be initiated, supervised and treatment response assessed by specialist physicians experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

2 Implementation

NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance (listed below). These are available on our website (www.nice.org.uk/TA126).

- Local costing template incorporating costing report to estimate the savings and costs associated with implementation.
- Audit criteria to monitor local practice.

Further information

Quick reference guide

This has been distributed to healthcare professionals working in the NHS in England and Wales (see www.nice.org.uk/TA126distributionlist). It is available from www.nice.org.uk/TA126quickrefguide

For printed copies, phone the NHS Response Line on 0870 1555 455 (quote reference number N1322).

Full guidance

This contains the following sections:

- 1 Guidance
- 2 The technology
- 3 The manufacturer's submission
- 4 Consideration of the evidence
- 5 Implementation
- 6 Recommendations for further research
- 7 Related NICE guidance
- 8 Review of guidance.

The full guidance also gives details of the Appraisal Committee and the sources of evidence considered. It is available from www.nice.org.uk/TA126guidance

NICE technology appraisal guidance 126

This guidance is written in the following context

This guidance represents the view of the Institute, which was arrived at after careful consideration of the available evidence. Healthcare professionals are expected to take it fully into account when exercising their clinical judgement. This guidance does not, however, override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

'Understanding NICE guidance'

Information for patients with rheumatoid arthritis and their carers is available from www.nice.org.uk/TA126publicinfo

For printed copies, phone the NHS Response Line on 0870 1555 455 (quote reference number N1323).

Related NICE guidance

- Guidance on the use of etanercept and infliximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. NICE technology appraisal guidance 36 (2002). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/TA036

NICE is developing the following guidance (details available from www.nice.org.uk).

- Adalimumab, etanercept and infliximab for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis (including a review of technology appraisal guidance 36). NICE technology appraisal guidance (publication date to be confirmed).
- Abatacept for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. NICE technology appraisal guidance (publication date to be confirmed).
- Rheumatoid arthritis: the management and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis in adults. NICE clinical guideline (publication expected December 2008).

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