

Quick reference guide

Cetuximab for the treatment of locally advanced squamous cell cancer of the head and neck

Guidance

- 1 Cetuximab in combination with radiotherapy is recommended as a treatment option only for patients with locally advanced squamous cell cancer of the head and neck whose Karnofsky performance-status score is 90% or greater and for whom all forms of platinum-based chemoradiotherapy treatment are contraindicated.
- 2 Patients currently receiving cetuximab in combination with radiotherapy for the treatment of locally advanced squamous cell cancer of the head and neck who do not meet the criteria outlined in section 1 should have the option to continue therapy until they and their clinicians consider it appropriate to stop.
- 3 When using Karnofsky performance-status score, clinicians should be mindful of the need to secure equality of access to treatment for patients with disabilities. Clinicians should bear in mind that people with disabilities may have difficulties with activities of daily living that are unrelated to their prognosis with respect to cancer of the head and neck. In such cases clinicians should make appropriate judgements of performance status taking into account the person's usual functional capacity and requirement for assistance with activities of daily living.

Implementation tools

NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance (listed below). These are available on our website (www.nice.org.uk/TA145).

- Local costing template incorporating a costing report to estimate the savings and costs associated with implementation.
- Audit support for monitoring local practice.

Further information

Ordering information

You can download the following documents from www.nice.org.uk/TA145

- A quick reference guide (this document) – a summary of recommendations for healthcare professionals.
- 'Understanding NICE guidance' – information for patients and carers.
- The full guidance.
- Details of all the evidence that was looked at and other background information.

For printed copies of the quick reference guide or 'Understanding NICE guidance', phone NICE publications on 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote:

- N1608 (quick reference guide)
- N1609 ('Understanding NICE guidance').

Related NICE guidance

For information about NICE guidance that has been issued or is in development, see the website (www.nice.org.uk).

- Improving outcomes in head and neck cancers: the manual. NICE cancer service guidance (2004). Available from www.nice.org.uk/csghn

Updating the appraisal

This technology appraisal will be considered for review in March 2011. Information about the progress of a review will be posted on the NICE website (www.nice.org.uk/TA145).

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.

Implementation of this guidance is the responsibility of local commissioners and/or providers. Commissioners and providers are reminded that it is their responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to avoid unlawful discrimination and to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way which would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

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