Position statement: consideration of products recommended for use in the Cancer Drugs Fund as comparators, or in a treatment sequence, in the appraisal of a new cancer product

1. Paragraph 6.2.2 of the Guide to Methods of Technology Appraisal 2013 lists several factors that should be considered when selecting an appropriate comparator. These include any existing NICE guidance, whether the treatment is established NHS practice in England, and cost effectiveness.

2. Paragraph 6.2.3 of the Guide to Methods of Technology Appraisal 2013 goes on to state that the committee will normally be guided by established practice in the NHS when identifying the appropriate comparator(s), including whether its use is so embedded in clinical practice that its use will continue unless and until it is replaced by a new technology. The uncertainty associated with the estimates of clinical and cost effectiveness is also taken into account.

3. Treatments that have been recommended by NICE for use in the Cancer Drugs Fund cannot be considered established practice because:

- Regulation 7 of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Constitution and Functions) and the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Functions) Regulations 2013 does not apply at this point.
- Their use is not embedded in clinical practice because no further funding will be available for patients to be prescribed the drug if NICE does not recommend the drug for routine commissioning at the end of the managed access period.
- Although they have plausible potential to satisfy the criteria for routine commissioning, the uncertainty in the clinical data (and consequently the cost-effectiveness estimates) was too great to make such a recommendation at the time of the appraisal.

4. Taking the above factors into consideration, products recommended for use in the Cancer Drugs Fund after 1 April 2016 should not be considered as comparators, or appropriately included in a treatment sequence, in subsequent relevant appraisals. Companies of new cancer products under appraisal should therefore not include treatments recommended for use in the Cancer Drugs Fund as comparators, or treatment sequence products in their economic modelling.

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