

Hepatitis B Foundation UK Response to NICE's STA Telbivudine

- The Hepatitis B Foundation UK is very disappointed that NICE is minded not to approve Telbivudine as a treatment for patients with hepatitis B
- Telbivudine for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B gives improved treatment options in this area of significant unmet medical need. Clinicians need to be able to have choice in order to treat patients according to their needs
- Studies at one year show that Telbivudine has shown greater HBV DNA reductions than Lamivudine, which is known to develop resistance in 80% of patients within one year. Adefovir also has resistance problems with 3% developing the problem in three years
- Without a range of treatments new mutations will develop and patients with resistance will continue to develop cirrhosis and liver cancer
- There is a dearth of economic information concerning treatment of patients who require hospitalisation for cirrhosis and a liver transplant in the UK however in the USA costs of the former are estimated to be \$14063 and the latter \$89076. The Department of Health estimates the cost of a liver transplant in 2004 was some £18.370 and the recipient also requires a large number of expensive medicines and out patient consultations as well as immunotherapy for life. In addition there is the growing cost of treatment for hepatocellular carcinoma, which again can have cost implications of both surgery and chemotherapy. Determining the value of new drugs for the treatment of hepatitis B drug acquisition must be balanced against expected benefits in morbidity and mortality and cost avoidance from disease progression.
- The Foundation feels that bearing in mind some 2800 patients have primary liver cancer in a year and some 700 people need a

transplant it is more cost effective to treat than to await the costly and frequently failing treatment for cancer and or cirrhosis

- In view of the limitations of current treatment and the problems of expensive second line treatments for cirrhosis, liver cancer and end stage liver disease it would be beneficial to both patients their families and professionals to have a treatment that they could use. This group of patients deserve to have a therapy to meet their unmet needs
- The Foundation is also concerned that should this therapy not be approved the UK has little else to offer these patients who may have developed resistance and may have high levels of virus. Surely there is a need to consider the very real public health issue of controlling as best as possible and infectious disease

Comments from the trustees and medical advisors of the Hepatitis B Foundation UK for complete list please visit www.hepb.org.uk about us



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