

The Hepatitis C Trust

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COMMENTS ON THE NICE APPRAISAL COUNSULTATION DOCUMENT ON INTERFERON ALFA (PEGYLATED AND NON-PEGYLATED) FOR THE TREATMENT OF MILD CHRONIC HEPATITIS C FROM THE HEPATITIS C TRUST

In general, we think this is an excellent document in its consideration of the evidence, in its interpretation of clinical and cost effectiveness, in its provisional recommendations and, particularly, in its extremely important suggestions for audit. As a patient organisation we are delighted that the provisional recommendations extend access to treatment to all patients.

We have, however, a few minor points:

Para 1.8. I suspect the word 'sustained' is not intended. A reduction in viral load at 12 weeks is an 'early' response.

Paras 1.8 and 1.9. The wording of both paragraphs suggests that retreatment in the specified circumstances and treatment of those transplanted or under 18 are prohibited. We would be happier if they stated that there is insufficient evidence to make recommendations.

Para 2.3. The words 'which affects the ability of the virus of the immune system to mount an effective response' should be omitted. They are unnecessary and suggest more is understood about the inter-relation between the virus genotype and the immune system than is currently the case.

Para 7.3.6 (and presumably point 6 on page 37). This is a restatement of para 1.8 so 'sustained' should be replaced by 'early'.

We believe that November 2008 is an excellent time for a review as it should coincide with the availability of trial data for at least 2 new drugs being fast-tracked for approval by the FDA in the US.

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