breakthrough
breast cancer

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BREAKTHROUGH BREAST CANCER'S RESPONSE TO NICE APPRAISAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON GEMCITABINE FOR THE TREATMENT OF METASTATIC BREAST CANCER

Breakthrough Breast Cancer is disappointed by the negative outcome of the preliminary recommendations on Gemcitabine.

Although we acknowledge that further clinical trials are needed, the current data show that the use of Gemcitabine significantly increases both progression free survival and overall survival time, without reducing quality of life, versus comparator treatment.

As a patient organisation, we would like to highlight the necessity to offer patients increased choice in their treatment options. Patients with metastatic breast cancer typically have limited treatment options and, understandably, want access to treatments that will give them the chance of both an increased length of survival and improved quality of life to spend more quality time with their friends and families.

Choice in treatment is also important because individual patients can react differently to chemotherapy drugs, experiencing varying side effects. Gemcitabine is relatively well tolerated and has been demonstrated to have less toxic effects than other chemotherapies resulting in a much improved quality of life for patients without a reduction in clinical effectiveness. For women with metastatic breast cancer, the importance of quality of life cannot be underestimated.

The impact of this negative decision by NICE, as stressed in the patient experts' submissions, is that patients will be denied the opportunity of increased life expectancy, improved quality of life and a reduction in pain.