



The Royal College of Pathologists

Re: NICE Health Technology Appraisal - Cinacalcet hydrochloride for the treatment of secondary hyperparathyroidism in patients with end-stage renal disease on maintenance dialysis therapy.

Thank you for your letter of 3 April 2006 with which you enclosed a letter from NICE and the HTA report from the Peninsula Technology Assessment Group.

I have looked at the Assessment Report with interest. It is a very thorough study (280 pages) that takes a commendable evidence-based approach to investigating the role of Cinacalcet hydrochloride in the treatment of secondary hyperparathyroidism in patients with end stage renal disease.

Cinacalcet hydrochloride is an exciting new drug that works by altering the sensitivity of calcium receptors within the parathyroid glands in such a way that parathyroid hormone (PTH) secretion is suppressed. This is a sophisticated form of pharmaceutical intervention and the Assessment Report produces an abundance of evidence to show that patients treated with Cinacalcet hydrochloride do indeed have lower levels of plasma PTH than patients treated by phosphate restriction and conventional therapy.

However, the Assessment Report goes on to examine evidence for patient benefit from the impact of a lowering of plasma PTH and the report concludes that such evidence is very sparse. Therefore, at this point in time the authors conclude that the theoretical benefit of lowering plasma PTH does not translate into improved survival or quality of life.

Cinacalcet hydrochloride is a complex drug produced by bioengineering. It is, therefore, an expensive medication. Although detail of the economic model is not available I am satisfied that the relative costings suggested in the report are realistic. Therefore, I accept the central conclusion from the report that the cost benefit ratio for the use of Cinacalcet hydrochloride does not support a recommendation in favour of the drug at this point in time. However, it is possible that further evidence of patient benefit will emerge in the literature from studies performed elsewhere in the world and the role of the drug should be kept under regular review.

From the perspective of the College I believe that we should express support for the content and conclusions of the Assessment Report.

With kind regard.

Yours sincerely

Graham H Beastall

