

**Maria Marrero  
Audit and Quality  
The Royal College of Pathologists  
2 Carlton House Terrace  
London SW1Y 5AF**

**25<sup>th</sup> July 2005**

**Dear Maria**

Further to your letter of 26th April 2005, and our subsequent correspondence by telephone and e-mail, as well as my attendance of the NICE Health Technology Appraisal Meeting on 17th June, I would like to submit the following comment to be taken into account on the documents submitted for my review on "The use of bevacizumab and cetuximab for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer".

In relation to the use of cetuximab for the treatment of colorectal cancer, I would like to emphasise that the use of EGFR immunocytochemical assay (EGFR ICC) to select patients for treatment is not a reliable option because of the following reasons:

- 1) A very high proportion (75-85%) of colorectal cancers are positive for EGFR ICC.
- 2) Of the 10% cases which respond have cancers showing widely varying degrees of immunocytochemical EGFR expression including a few which are apparently negative for EGFR ICC.
- 3) Recent evidence (Lancet Oncol. 2005 May;6(5):257-8) shows that the response is more tightly correlated to the capacity of the drug to inhibit cancer cell proliferation in vitro, and Fluorescence In Situ Hybridisation (FISH) evidence amplification of the EGFR gene.

In the light of the above information there is a need to review the methodology for selection of patients for cetuximab treatment, before recommending the use of the drug at the NHS level.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Bharat Jasani**

PS I have tried to send this report by e-mail to your address but it has been repeatedly returned. I have also tried to contact you by telephone but there has been the answer phone each time. Hence, I have resorted to send my comments by fax. Bharat