

Thursday, 03 May 2007

Dear Dr Longson,

We write on behalf of the British Society for Haematology, the Royal College of Pathology and the Royal College of Physicians and the UK Myeloma Forum in response to your email letter of 10th April 2007 which explains the Appraisals Committee's intention to appraise the use of Bortezomib in combination with Dexamethasone separately from the consideration of the use of Bortezomib as monotherapy. In order to appraise the combination you have explained that the Institute's operating procedures require a new referral from the Department of Health.

We were disappointed to learn that it would not be possible to reassess the evidence for the cost effectiveness of Bortezomib in a timely way, in all the circumstances suggested by the Appeals committee, including its use with Dexamethasone.

We believe that if Bortezomib is re-evaluated only as monotherapy there is a risk that some PCTs will interpret even a favourable judgement rigidly and only allow clinicians to use it in this way. This would effectively deprive some patients of the opportunity of an improved response.

We feel that it is clear that the fourth and final suggestion by the Appeal Committee is an important element of the reassessment of the role and cost effectiveness of Bortezomib and should ideally form part of the reappraisal as soon as possible. However if it is not possible for the Appraisal Committee to overcome the need for re-referral our organisations feel that the Appraisal Committee should proceed without delay to the reassessment of the cost-effectiveness of Bortezomib as monotherapy. We do feel that insistence on this step does run counter to the spirit of the Appeal Committee's decision and conclusion but we are most anxious to ensure that there are no further delays which re-referral would indeed introduce and would be to the detriment of patients.

We look forward to contributing to the meeting on May 8th when the reassessment of the cost-effectiveness of Bortezomib will be reassessed in the first three circumstances outlined by the Appeal Committee.

Dr Graham Jackson, Professor Adrian Newlands, and Dr J Behrens,

On behalf of the British Society for Haematology, the Royal College of Pathology and the Royal College of Physicians and the UK Myeloma Forum