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National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

**Health Technology Appraisal**  
**Corticosteroids for the treatment of chronic asthma in children under 12 years**

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Royal College of Nursing

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**Introduction**

With a membership of over 395,000 registered nurses, midwives, health visitors, nursing students, health care assistants and nurse cadets, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the voice of nursing across the UK and the largest professional union of nursing staff in the world. RCN members work in a variety of hospital and community settings in the NHS and the independent sector. The RCN promotes patient and nursing interests on a wide range of issues by working closely with the Government, the UK parliaments and other national and European political institutions, trade unions, professional bodies and voluntary organisations.

The RCN welcomes to opportunity to review this document.

**Response to the Appraisal Consultation Document on the use of  
Corticosteroids for the treatment of chronic asthma in children under 12  
years**

We acknowledge that the Appraisal Consultation Document is a working document, and consider it very comprehensive. The contents, however, seem to be modelled around existing guidelines, the British Thoracic Society (BTS) Guidelines and the Children's British National Formulary (BNF) rolled into one and may not inform clinical practice more than those documents already do. The NICE technology appraisals guidance are very informative, particularly informing those with limited

clinical knowledge of the technology under consideration, in this case, inhaler devices and provide a quick summary of considerations when choosing these devices for children. Whilst this information is very useful for patients and carers, for the healthcare professionals a different approach is suggested, particularly for inclusion in the Quick Reference Guide version of the guidance.

We note that the ACD recommends the cheapest preparation. We accept the need to maximise resources, however, as nurses, we feel the psychological and social needs of children and families should be fully taken into account in deciding what is best for the patient. The ACD does not seem to have fully considered this. We would suggest more discussion around the value of patient education and empowerment should be included. Healthcare professionals rely heavily on parents / carers to administer treatment and so it is their health care beliefs that we need to consider. This is very much a nursing role and should be promoted.

We note the advice from 'clinical specialists'. It would have been good to have had more advice from more healthcare professionals.

Overall, guidance on the use of corticosteroids for treatment of asthma in children under twelve years is welcomed. However, we consider that the current document as it stands may not add to the body of knowledge on paediatric asthma management issues as the contents are already widely disseminated in other formats.