Institute of Alcohol Studies

NICE Single Technology Appraisal (STA)

Nalmefene for reducing alcohol consumption in people with alcohol dependence [ID660]

Institute of Alcohol Studies comments on appraisal consultation document

The Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above Single Technology Appraisal consultation document. The core aim of IAS is to serve the public interest on public policy issues linked to alcohol, by advocating for the use of scientific evidence in policy-making to reduce alcohol-related harm. The IAS is a company limited by guarantee, No [redacted] and registered charity, No 1112671. For more information visit [redacted]

IAS Comments

The comments IAS wishes to submit to this stage of the STA appraisal consultation are in addition to those made in our submission to NICE in July 2013. Based on our reading of the appraisal consultation documents we note the following:

1. No guidance is provided on the identification of 'patients with mild dependence not requiring detoxification'. The Nalmefene studies considered in the STA were undertaken in this specific population and there is no evidence to support use of this medication is other populations of drinkers. Without specific guidance on patient eligibility there is a very real danger that the medication could be used to treat any patients who presents with a drinking problem. Any recommendation made by NICE should contain specific eligibility criteria for patient selection e.g. AUDIT scores etc.

2. Insufficient attention has been paid to the concerns raised by the Expert Review Group in relation to the duration of treatment. While it is highly unlikely that a GP would continue to prescribe Nalmefene for patients who continue to drink heavily, no specific guidance is provided about the duration of treatment. Without this it is possible that some patients might continue to receive Nalmefene inappropriately when they should instead be reassessed and referred to secondary care.

We hope these comments provide useful input into the consultation process. Please do not hesitate to contact [redacted] with any questions relating to the above.

Institute of Alcohol Studies
29 July, 2014