NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

Single Technology Appraisal

Omalizumab for previously treated chronic spontaneous urticaria

Response to consultee, commentator and public comments on the Appraisal Consultation Document

Definitions:

Consultees – Organisations that accept an invitation to participate in the appraisal including the companies, national professional organisations, national patient organisations, the Department of Health and the Welsh Government and relevant NHS organisations in England. Consultees can make a submission and participate in the consultation on the appraisal consultation document (ACD; if produced). All non-company consultees can nominate clinical experts and/or patient experts to verbally present their personal views to the Appraisal Committee. Company consultees can also nominate clinical experts. Representatives from NHS England and clinical commissioning groups invited to participate in the appraisal may also attend the Appraisal Committee as NHS commissioning experts. All consultees have the opportunity to consider an appeal against the final recommendations, or report any factual errors, within the final appraisal determination (FAD).

Clinical and patient experts and NHS commissioning experts – The Chair of the Appraisal Committee and the NICE project team select clinical experts and patient experts from nominations by consultees and commentators. They attend the Appraisal Committee meeting as individuals to answer questions to help clarify issues about the submitted evidence and to provide their views and experiences of the technology and/or condition. Before they attend the meeting, all experts must either submit a written statement (using a template) or indicate they agree with the submission made by their nominating organisation.

Commentators – Commentators can participate in the consultation on the ACD (if produced), but NICE does not ask them to make any submission for the appraisal. Non-company commentator organisations can nominate clinical experts and patient experts to verbally present their personal views to the Appraisal Committee. Commentator organisations representing relevant comparator technology companies can also nominate clinical experts. These organisations receive the FAD and have opportunity to report any factual errors. These organisations include comparator technology companies, Healthcare Improvement Scotland any relevant National Collaborating Centre (a group commissioned by NICE to develop clinical guidelines), other related research groups where appropriate (for example, the Medical Research Council and National Cancer Research Institute); other groups such as the NHS Confederation, the NHS Commercial Medicines Unit, the Scottish Medicines Consortium, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland).

Public – Members of the public have the opportunity to comment on the ACD when it is posted on the Institute's web site 5 days after it is sent to consultees and commentators. These comments are usually presented to the appraisal committee in full, but NICE reserves the right to summarise and edit comments received during consultations, or not to publish them at all, where in the reasonable opinion of NICE, the comments are voluminous, publication would be unlawful or publication would be otherwise inappropriate.

Please note: Comments received in the course of consultations carried out by NICE are published in the interests of openness and transparency, and to promote understanding of how recommendations are developed. The comments are published as a record of the submissions that NICE has received, and are not endorsed by NICE, its officers or advisory committees.

Comments received from consultees

Consultee	Comment	Response
Novartis	I. Has all of the relevant evidence been taken into account? There are several pieces of evidence that Novartis do not believe the Committee has adequately considered. These include evidence for the assumption that prior responders to omalizumab will respond on re-treatment and evidence that omalizumab responders are able to discontinue background medications. Our comments related to this are provided in Section A (major comments) and Section B (minor comments) below. Our responses to the direct requests for revised analyses and clarifications from the NICE Committee are provided in Section C.	Comment noted. See individual responses in each section below.
Novartis	**A) Novartis main comments on the ACD** **1) Time to relapse assumptions** Within the ACD (Section 4.17), the Committee asserts that the cost-effectiveness model overestimates time to relapse. The ACD states that "The Committee heard that…in most patients, the condition relapses within 4 to 6 weeks of stopping treatment". Although the ACD notes that testimonies from clinical experts suggest that CSU disease relapses quickly after stopping omalizumab, Novartis would like to highlight that the original relapse assumptions used in the model received support from clinicians engaged by the ERG. Page 75 of the ERG report states that "For these curves the median time to relapse varies between about 12 weeks post treatment for urticaria-free and mild urticaria to 20 weeks for well-controlled urticaria. Clinical advice to the ERG notes that this assumption is reasonable." The estimates of time to relapse from UK clinical opinion should be considered in the context of how omalizumab is currently used in clinical practice. It is currently difficult for clinicians to access funding for omalizumab and hence its current use in CSU is limited largely to those patients who are very difficult-to-treat (for instance those who have been treated unsuccessfully with a large range of unlicensed drugs including immunosuppressants). Therefore, the testimonies of many clinical experts	Comment noted. Following consultation, the Committee agreed that patients who would have omalizumab before immunosuppressants may have a longer relapse-free period and the probabilities for relapse estimated in the revised model for the immediate post-treatment period are plausible (see section 4.13 of the FAD). The Committee noted that the assumption that all patients relapse by 64 weeks was based on an observational study (Metz et al. 2014) which reported 64 weeks as the longest relapse-free period. The Committee noted that most patients in the same study the relapse-free period was between 4 and 8 weeks. The Committee recalled the clinical testimony about quick relapse after stopping omalizumab and also noted that cumulative relapse rates available from the post treatment period of the GLACIAL trial showed a linear trend. Therefore, the Committee did not accept the company's view that linear extrapolation

Consultee	Comment	Response
	are based on use of omalizumab in a different population to that covered by the economic model. UK clinical experience to date is amongst a population that is extremely refractory and who therefore may be predicted to relapse more quickly because of the recalcitrant nature of their condition. In addition, current clinical experience with omalizumab is in treating mixed populations (i.e. including patients with inducible rather than spontaneous urticaria, for which omalizumab is not licensed). Based on the above, there are clear limitations to basing the relapse assumptions within the economic model solely on clinical experience that is based on a population misaligned, and therefore of limited relevance, to the population specified in the decision problem. We request that the committee carefully considers the revised base case analyses conducted using the linear relapse assumption to represent "worst-case" cost-effectiveness results; we believe these analyses underestimate the time to relapse likely to be observed when omalizumab is used in a population with inadequate response to up-dosed H_1 antihistamines +/- LTRA +/- H_2 antihistamines.	a 'worst-case' scenario and concluded that linearly extrapolating relapse data from the GLACIAL trial was the most plausible scenario (see section 4.14 of the FAD).
Novartis	**2) Evidence supporting re-treatment efficacy assumption** The ACD notes that there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of re-treatment with omalizumab, though acknowledges the opinion of clinical experts that, in their experience, re-treatment is successful. Novartis accepts that the evidence for effectiveness of omalizumab on re-treatment is limited, and has therefore conducted the additional analysis requested by the committee whereby a waning of treatment effect on re-treatment with omalizumab is incorporated (See Section C.3.iv). However, we believe it is important to re-iterate the support for omalizumab not being associated with a waning of efficacy upon re-treatment, which is provided by clinical experience and observational data, as well as by evidence at a pharmacokinetic level. There are a number of pieces of observational data that provide evidence of omalizumab efficacy being retained upon re-treatment. • The Metz et al. (2014) study evaluated disease activity and adverse events in 25 CSU and/or chronic inducible urticaria patients who received omalizumab (dose range 150 mg – 600 mg) as re-treatment after an initial successful trial of omalizumab followed by relapse.1 Following relapse on treatment discontinuation, patients were re-treated with omalizumab and all patients showed the same response rate (100% responders) and adverse event rate (0% adverse events) as on initial treatment. Furthermore, the response following first injection of retreatment was seen	Following consultation, the Committee agreed that published observational studies, the pharmacokinetics of omalizumab and experience with omalizumab in severe persistent asthma supported an assumption of a constant treatment effect on repeated courses (see section 4.17 of the FAD).

Consultee	Comment	Response
	to be rapid, occurring within the first 4 weeks (usually during the first days) and all patients were able to stop concomitant antihistamine treatment. The doses that resulted in a complete response on re-treatment were seen to be the same as those used during initial treatment. The authors of this study concluded that omalizumab re-treatment was effective and safe in patients with chronic urticaria who have previously benefitted from omalizumab treatment. • Kai et al. (2014) reported on 6 CSU patients treated with omalizumab in the UK, 4 of whom received multiple re-treatment courses of omalizumab.2 Each of the subsequent courses of omalizumab resulted in full response as measured by DLQI scores, over the 5 re-treatment cycles performed. • In the Ganesha et al. (2013) study two omalizumab patients achieving complete remission had their omalizumab withdrawn after 6 doses and relapsed over a period of three months.3 Upon re-starting omalizumab, remission was again achieved in both of these patients. • Armengot-Carbo et al (2012) report successful results of omalizumab as re-treatment amongst a population described as chronic refractory urticaria patients (as opposed to patients with CSU, specifically).4 Two patients who had achieved a complete response on initial omalizumab treatment were both reported to have then achieved a complete response when re-treated with omalizumab following relapse upon initial treatment removal. Taken together, these observational studies represent a body of evidence supporting efficacy of omalizumab in 33/33 patients who received omalizumab re-treatment following relapse. There is further support that re-treatment with omalizumab is likely to be effective at a pharmacokinetic level. Secondary loss of response of biologic drugs over time can sometimes be attributed to immunogenicity arising from the formation of anti-drug antibodies (ADAs). This phenomenon has been well documented with anti-TNF monoclonal antibodies in chronic inflammatory diseases.5 For instance ADAs are reported in 5%-14% of patients treated with anti-TNFs in Phase III trials in Rheumatoid Arthritis.6-10 In contrast, no ADAs were detected in CSU patients receiving omalizumab in our Phase III trials (0% at week 40 in GLACIAL and ASTERIA I; 0% at week 28 in ASTERIA II). This is consistent with a review of clinical study data of patients with asthma or allergic rhinitis which demonstrated that omalizumab treatment did not lead to measurable ADAs in these patients.11 Although there is limited long-term data on the use of omalizumab in CSU patients, omalizumab has been prescribed in severe allergic asthma patients since 2005, and	

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	as of 31st December 2013 this has contributed approximately 490,400 patient-years of patient exposure. No loss of efficacy over time has been reported in patients who responded to treatment in this indication. Several studies have shown that the efficacy of omalizumab was maintained, and in certain cases improved, at 2 years and 4 years.12-15 This indicates that omalizumab is associated with low immunogenicity, and hence re-treatment with omalizumab is likely to be effective. In acknowledgment of the lack of extensive long-term data on omalizumab re-treatment, Novartis provided a scenario analysis which explored the potential that some patients who responded initially to omalizumab would not respond on re-treatment. In the original scenario analysis included in our submission (see Table B44 and further explanation provided in response to B2.c. ERG clarification question) the proportion of responding versus non-responding patients from the initial treatment course was applied to all subsequent courses (even though only patients who responded to the prior course will continue with re-treatment). The results of this scenario analysis are provided in Table B59 of our original submission and generated an ICER of £24,301. The Committee have requested analysis of a less extreme scenario; that of a waning of treatment effect during repeat courses of omalizumab. We have addressed this by assuming that a proportion of patients will not respond on re-treatment with omalizumab despite a prior response, and by varying the proportion of patients assumed to be non-responders to subsequent treatment courses. On the basis of the numbers of patients observed to have experienced response on re-treatment we have used a maximum of 10% non-response on re-treatment within the scenario analyses of a treatment waning effect (see Section C.3.iv) for results). Taking into account the observational evidence, clinical opinion and pharmacokinetic considerations, we believe that it is not necessarily the case that omalizumab effectiveness would be expected to wane in the manner explored in this analysis.	
Novartis	**3) Evidence supporting scenario in which patients on omalizumab only require licenced doses of H_1 antihistamines as background therapy** The base case of the economic model presented in the submission assumes that all patients will continue on the same mix of background therapies throughout treatment with omalizumab. This represents a conservative assumption, as clinical feedback indicates that many patients are able to reduce their background medications once they are receiving omalizumab. We are pleased that the ACD recognises that there is a “decrease in use of short courses of oral corticosteroids that has not been factored into the modelling” and	The Committee noted that the model did not account for using fewer concomitant medications (such as H_1-antihistamines, LTRAs and H_2-antihistamines) or rescue treatments (such as corticosteroids), and taking these into account would decrease the ICER (see section 4.20 of the FAD).

Consultee	Comment	Response
	that this represents an uncaptured additional benefit of omalizumab. In addition to reductions in corticosteroid use, there is also evidence to support that patients receiving omalizumab can reduce their use of other therapies, notably their background medications (LTRA and/or H_2 antihistamines). Evidence for this is provided by the retrospective EXPLORE-OMA study, which was described in Section 6.7 of our original submission. This study provides information on use of chronic urticaria medications prior to, concomitantly with, and after omalizumab use in a total of 46 patients with CSU with or without (+/-) chronic inducible urticaria. A summary table detailing trends in use of first-line antihistamines, second-line H_2 antihistamines, second-line montelukast (LTRA) and other therapies is provided in Table 1 (see Novartis comments on ACD). [redacted] We acknowledge that there are limitations to the evidence provided above from the EXPLORE-OMA study. It represents a retrospective, observational study and hence suffers from the issues of confounding bias inherent in this study type. However, the data does provide anecdotal evidence for the reduction in use of first-line antihistamines, second-line H_2 antihistamines and second-line montelukast (LTRA) that can be achieved during treatment with omalizumab. In addition to the EXPLORE-OMA data, published observational studies provide support for the reduction in background medication requirements that can be achieved with omalizumab treatment: • In treating 110 Spanish CSU patients with omalizumab, Labrador-Horrillo et al. (2013) reported that the use of concomitant medication during the trial period significantly decreased ($p<0.005$).16 Notably, 66 patients (60%) within the trial were able to withdraw all concomitant medications, being treated with omalizumab alone. Although the specific concomitant medications used are not reported, medications that had been used by patients prior to study entry included up to four times licensed doses of H_1 antihistamines, H_2 antihistamines and LTRA (montelukast). • A study by Metz et al. (2014) considered 25 patients with CSU and/or chronic inducible urticaria (as described above).1 Under the eligibility criteria for this study, the 25 patients who received omalizumab as retreatment had all previously experienced ≥90% improvement in symptoms on initial treatment “without the requirement of any other	

Consultee	Comment	Response
	drugs used for treatment of urticaria". This highlights the potential for omalizumab to reduce requirements for background therapy. Furthermore, this study found that when these 25 patients received omalizumab as re-treatment, all patients were able to stop antihistamine treatment. This suggests that omalizumab can also reduce the necessity for background medication when used as re-treatment. In order to try to capture this additional benefit of reduced background therapy requirements, our submission included a scenario analysis in which we assumed that patients on omalizumab only require licenced doses of H_1 antihistamines. The results of this scenario analysis are provided in Table B59 of our original submission and indicate an ICER of £15,665. We have repeated this scenario analysis for the revised base case as requested by the Committee in the ACD and have also conducted various analyses of "Severe urticaria" only patients versus "Moderate urticaria" only patients (see Section C.3.iv), as well as an analysis using the ERG's preferred base case (see Table 2 in Novartis comments on ACD). All analyses in these different population groups demonstrate ICERs consistently below the cost-effectiveness threshold. In addition to reductions in background medications on omalizumab, there is also evidence to support a reduced requirement for rescue medications in patients treated with omalizumab. An exploratory efficacy endpoint within the GLACIAL trial was the change from baseline in rescue medication (diphenhydramine [a sedating H_1 antihistamine]) use at Week 12. Omalizumab 300 mg was seen to be associated with a numerical reduction in mean medication use of -3.9 (95% CI -4.9, -3.0) compared to a change of -2.7 (95% CI -3.8, -1.6) in the placebo arm, though this difference was non-significant.17 In addition, a small study by Kaplan et al (2008) amongst 12 patients with chronic autoimmune urticaria found significant reductions in the use of the rescue medication hydroxyzine 25 mg, were achieved upon treatment with omalizumab. The change in mean rescue medication use from baseline to the final four week period of omalizumab treatment was 69.5 (±60.5; P=0.004).18 These reductions were generally seen both in patients who achieved a marked (complete) response on omalizumab and also in patients only achieving a partial response, with six of the seven complete responders taking no hydroxyzine after week 12. Although a small, uncontrolled study, this provides further support that omalizumab treatment can achieve reductions in rescue medication use.	
Novartis	**4) Recommendation of omalizumab for patients with inadequate response to both LTRA and H_2 antihistamines**	The Committee noted the comment that H_2-antihistamines are an out-of-date treatment for

Consultee	Comment	Response
	In Section 4.2 of the ACD, it is noted that "there is limited evidence on the effectiveness for H_2 antihistamines in patients whose disease is non-responsive to H_1 antihistamines and their use in clinical practice is decreasing". We are also aware that the ERG report commented on the decreasing use of H_2 antihistamines, their withdrawal from recent guidelines and the implications of this for the description of our positioning, in which it is stated that patients must have previously had an inadequate response to up to four times licensed doses of H_1 antihistamines, H_2 antihistamines and LTRA. Specifically, the ERG stated that they were "….concerned that whilst the described patient group may reflect patients currently being treated within the NHS, this may not be the case in the future. This is because the most recent guideline from EAACI/GA[2]LEN/EDF/WAO 2013[1] does not recommend H_2 antihistamines". We would therefore like to take this opportunity to clarify the reasoning behind the description used for our positioning. We included H_2 antihistamines in the description of our proposed positioning based on the existing evidence base for omalizumab – particularly the GLACIAL trial, in which many patients had exhibited an inadequate response to H_2 antihistamines prior to entry into the trial. The GLACIAL trial was designed several years ago when use of H_2 antihistamines was more widespread. As the GLACIAL trial formed the core evidence base of our submission, we felt it was appropriate to accurately reflect this evidence base in our positioning by including prior H_2 antihistamine treatment as an eligibility criterion. The sub-group analysis conducted (Section 6.5.3 of our original submission) shows consistency in efficacy between the full cohort versus the most refractory cohort within the GLACIAL trial. Based on this, we do not believe the benefits of omalizumab would be notably different in a CSU population with only prior exposure to up-dosed H_1 antihistamines and LTRA compared to a population with prior exposure to up-dosed H_1 antihistamines and LTRA and H_2 antihistamines. Only 14% of the GLACIAL cohort were taking up-dosed H_1 antihistamines + LTRA at the beginning of the study. Due to the small sub-group size we did not consider it appropriate to present the evidence from this population of patients alone, even though this may better reflect current trends in the treatment pathway, and a move away from H_2 antihistamine use within the management of CSU. In a case such as this, we believe it would be appropriate for out-dated standard-of-care therapies to be removed from final NICE guidance. There is precedent for this, from the omalizumab asthma NICE appraisal (TA278) in which the oral beta-2 agonists were amongst the standard background therapies within the Phase III study, but the Committee did not include them in their guidance based on clinical feedback that they no longer represented UK standard therapy. As such, we request	chronic spontaneous urticaria and did not make exposure to H_2 antihistamines a pre-requisite for omalizumab treatment in the final recommendations (see sections 1.1, 4.2 and 4.22 of the FAD).

Consultee	Comment	Response
	the Committee to consider recommending omalizumab as an option in patients with inadequate response to up-dosed H_1 antihistamines and LTRA – without the requirement for prior exposure to H_2 antihistamines.	
Novartis	**5) Other UK health technology assessment** As indicated on page 19 of our original submission, a submission to the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) for omalizumab in CSU was made earlier this year. We would like to advise NICE, in confidence, that SMC have accepted omalizumab for restricted use within NHS Scotland. The restriction is for use in adults and adolescents with CSU who have an inadequate response to combination therapy with H_1 antihistamines, LTRA and H_2 antihistamines. This includes both patients with severe urticaria and those with moderate urticaria. This information will be published on the SMC website on Monday January 12th 2015.	Comment noted.
Novartis	**6) Evidence for fast onset of action which is not captured in the cost-effectiveness model** Clinical trial evidence presented within the submission demonstrates the potential for omalizumab to provide rapid symptom relief, within the first four weeks of treatment. Indeed, clinical data indicates that the difference between omalizumab and placebo arms emerges as early as week 1, as noted on page 44 of the ERG report. In the ACD, the Committee also notes comments from patient and clinical experts that, when patients with severe disease have omalizumab, their disease improves rapidly within 1 to 2 weeks after the first dose. These benefits of omalizumab in the first four weeks of treatment are not captured within the QALYs accrued in the economic model, due to the 4-week cycle length used. Therefore, the model estimates of the initial QALY gain associated with omalizumab are likely to under-estimate the true QALY differential between omalizumab and “no further pharmacological treatment”.	The Committee noted that, because of a cycle length of 4 weeks, the model did not fully capture the rapid relief of symptoms patients experienced during the initial weeks after starting omalizumab and agreed that incorporating this would decrease the ICER (see section 4.20 of the FAD).
Novartis	**7) Consideration of societal perspective** Novartis notes that the ERG commented that the scenario analysis in which societal costs of CSU were included in the cost-effectiveness model was not contextualised. The reason for the lack of discussion on the analysis exploring the societal perspective within the original submission is that we are aware this perspective does not form part of the NICE reference case. However, we felt that the societal considerations were important to include in a scenario analysis given that CSU affects a working age population (and hence has potential for a considerable societal impact), and because at the time of development of the submission NICE were considering a move to a value-based assessment approach. Having provided	Comment noted. As highlighted by the company, productivity costs are not included as part of the reference-case.

Consultee	Comment	Response
	this context, we feel it is relevant to re-iterate here that when societal costs in terms of work productivity are incorporated within the model, omalizumab dominates "no further pharmacological treatment". This continues to be the case when societal considerations are included across all revised analyses presented in Table 2. These include the base case requested by the Committee, analyses of both moderate and severe patient populations regardless of the definition of relapse / re-treatment, and the ERG's preferred base case.	
Novartis	**8) Clarification regarding the proportion of the GLACIAL cohort aligned to proposed positioning** Novartis' positioning for omalizumab is as "add-on therapy for patients who have previously been treated unsuccessfully with up to 4x licensed doses of H_1 antihistamines, LTRA and H_2 antihistamines, and who are experiencing an inadequate response to whichever combination of these therapies they are currently receiving" i.e. if patients have tried LTRA / H_2 antihistamines in the past but not experienced any benefit then they should not be forced to continue on these medications in order to be eligible for omalizumab. This description of the positioning should be considered in the context of the consideration that H_2 antihistamines could be excluded as an eligibility criterion for omalizumab based on the most recent guideline, as described in Section 4.19 In their "Erratum to the ERG report" the ERG stated that [redacted] of patients in the GLACIAL trial are aligned to this positioning. This figure was also quoted in the Committee's Pre-Meeting Briefing document. However, this value is incorrect. This proportion, which was based on post-hoc patient level analyses, represents the proportion of the GLACIAL cohort receiving all three classes of drugs (H_1 antihistamines, H_2 antihistamines and LTRA) concomitantly during the GLACIAL study. This population of patients taking all three classes of drugs concomitantly does not reflect the population of our positioning, since the positioning defines eligibility in terms of both current and prior medications. The purpose of the post-hoc analysis was to demonstrate the efficacy of omalizumab in the most refractory group of patients in the GLACIAL trial; it does not represent the patients matching our positioning. As detailed in the diagram on page 30 of our submission and acknowledged in Table 1 of the pre-meeting briefing (and on page 18 of the ERG report), there are four potential combinations of therapies that patients may be receiving at the point where omalizumab is initiated in practice. These four combinations are listed below: 1. H_1 antihistamines + LTRA + H_2 antihistamines	Comment noted. The Committee noted the comment that H2 antihistamines are an out-of-date treatment for chronic spontaneous urticaria and did not make exposure to H2 antihistamines a pre-requisite for omalizumab treatment in the final recommendations (see sections 1.1, 4.2 and 4.22 of the FAD).

Consultee	Comment	Response
	2. H_1 antihistamines + LTRA – provided H_2 antihistamines have been tried in the past 3. H_1 antihistamines + H_2 antihistamines – provided LTRA has been tried in the past 4. Up-dosed H_1 antihistamines alone – provided both LTRA and H_2 antihistamines have been tried in the past Based on post hoc patient level analyses, [redacted] of those in the omalizumab arm of the GLACIAL study had either concomitant treatment with all three classes during the study period or had concomitant treatment with H_1 antihistamines + H_2 antihistamines and prior LTRA or had concomitant treatment with H_1 antihistamines + LTRA during the study period and prior H_2 antihistamines. This represents the first three groups listed above who are aligned to the proposed positioning. The fourth group above are not included within GLACIAL since it recruited patients with an inadequate response to H_1 antihistamines (up to 4 times the licensed dose), and either H_2 antihistamines or LTRA, or all three drugs in combination. In conclusion, we would like to highlight that the ERG's assertion that [redacted] of patients in the GLACIAL trial match our proposed positioning is incorrect and in fact the correct interpretation is that [redacted] of patients in the GLACIAL trial match our positioning.	
Novartis	**B) Novartis supplementary comments on the ACD** In addition to the major comments above, we also have some minor comments regarded suggested wording changes in the ACD, as follows: 3.1 The last part of the paragraph inaccurately describes our positioning. It states "…had responded inadequately to whichever combination of therapies that had been used" whereas it would be more accurate to say "…is responding inadequately to whichever combination of therapies they are currently receiving" (See related comments in A.7). 3.7 In reference to anti-omalizumab antibodies, Section 3.7 of the ACD states that "most patients tested negative at baseline". Only 1 patient in the entire safety evaluable population tested positive for anti-therapeutic antibodies (1 patient in the omalizumab 300 mg arm tested positive for the anti-rhuFc fraction) at baseline and hence we feel that this statement is misleading.[20] We would suggest changing the wording to "all but one patient tested negative at baseline".	Correction made as requested (see section 3.1 of the FAD) Comment noted. Section 3.7 of the FAD has been amended.

<table>
<tr><th>Consultee</th><th>Comment</th><th>Response</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>3.34 In the last sentence of this paragraph it is inaccurate to say that “patients who stop omalizumab were not re-treated” because all patients are stopping omalizumab at 24 weeks to check if spontaneous remission has occurred. It would be more accurate to say that “patients who discontinue omalizumab were not re-treated…”

3.45 The last bullet point in Section 3.45 contains two separate scenario analyses in a single bullet – “excluding monitoring costs for omalizumab” and “including indirect costs due to productivity impact” should be separate bullet points.

3.47 The ERGs conclusion that the over-estimation was more pronounced when using LOCF was based on an unjustified comparison – as detailed in our factual accuracy check of the ERG report some of the model settings needed adjustment from the base case in order to more closely reflect the GLACIAL trial structure (e.g. 24 weeks treatment for all versus early stop for non-responders). Although the ERG did not accept this as a factual inaccuracy they responded that they had not presented it as a validation exercise. Within the ACD it is, however, being mentioned in the context of validating “the model’s outputs against the GLACIAL trial outcomes”. However, with the original model set to; LOCF imputation for missing data, 24 weeks treatment for all patients and no all-cause mortality, the model actually underestimates, rather than overestimates, the proportion of responders to omalizumab. As can be seen from the table below, for both outcomes provided in Section 7.7.1 of our submission (UAS7=0 and UAS7≤6), at both time points (12 weeks and 24 weeks), the original model estimated lower proportions of patients than were observed in the GLACIAL trial, using LOCF imputation for missing data. The LOCF trial results were provided in Table 5 of reference 90 accompanying our original submission. Therefore we do not believe the ACD should state that “the over-estimation was more pronounced when using the last observation carried forward method”, since as the figures below indicate the model actually underestimates the LOCF trial results.
<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Omalizumab</th><th colspan="2">No further pharmacological treatment</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>LOCF trial result</th><th>Original model base case result</th><th>LOCF trial result</th><th>Original model base case result</th></tr>
<tr><td>UAS7= 0 at 12 weeks</td><td>34.1%</td><td>33.3%</td><td>4.8%</td><td>4.2%</td></tr>
<tr><td>UAS7≤ 0 at 12 weeks</td><td>56.3%</td><td>55.1%</td><td>12.0%</td><td>11.6%</td></tr>
<tr><td>UAS7= 0 at 24 weeks</td><td>44.8%</td><td>41.7%</td><td>3.6%</td><td>3.2%</td></tr>
</table></td><td>Comment noted. Section 3.34 of the FAD has been amended.

Comment noted. The original sensitivity analyses have been removed and the new analyses included in the FAD.

Comment noted. The ERG’s comment on the data amputation method has been removed in the FAD.</td></tr>
</table>

Consultee	Comment	Response
	<table><tr><td>UAS7≤ 0 at 24 weeks</td><td>60.3%</td><td>57.1%</td><td>19.3%</td><td>18.0%</td></tr></table> 3.52 We acknowledge that the ERG could not independently verify drop-out rates (by which we are referring to missing data – see response to clarification questions). However, we assume that "stopping" rates refer to omalizumab discontinuation – this parameter could be verified against the Kaplan et al. 2013 publication on the GLACIAL trial.[17] We therefore suggest removing the reference to "stopping rates" in this sentence. 4.4 Section 4.4 quotes [redacted] as the proportion of GLACIAL trial patients who were receiving high-dose H_1 antihistamines plus H_2 antihistamines and/or LTRA on entry to the trial (i.e. study day 1). This is not correct, as [redacted] represents those in the omalizumab arm of the GLACIAL study with *either* concomitant treatment with all three classes during the study period *or* concomitant treatment with H_1 + H_2 and prior LTRA *or* concomitant treatment with H_1 + LTRA during the study period and prior H_2 antihistamines. When the whole GLACIAL cohort is considered, as opposed to the omalizumab arm only, the figure is [redacted]. The phrase "when they entered the trial" is inaccurate. We would suggest rewording this phrase to "The Committee heard that [redacted] of patients in the GLACIAL trial were aligned with the positioning for omalizumab proposed by the manufacturer". Finally, the figure of [redacted] was marked as academic in confidence in the submission and hence should be marked as such in the ACD.	Comment noted. Section 3.47 of the FAD has been amended. Comment noted Confidential information has been removed.
British Association of Dermatologists (endorsed by Royal College of Physicians)	Omalizumab offers a remarkable advance in the management of chronic spontaneous urticaria (CSU). Clinical trials and worldwide use to date have shown that it is very effective and safe with no requirement for screening investigations or safety monitoring. Not only does it offer an alternative to existing off-licence therapies that carry important risk profiles, including immunosuppressants and oral corticosteroids, but it is also often effective for patients who have not responded to them or in whom they are contraindicated. In short, it is a breakthrough therapy for patients unresponsive to H1 antihistamines and, in particular, for patients who do not respond adequately to other treatments currently available.	Comment noted. The Committee acknowledged the 'immunosuppressant-sparing' effect of omalizumab and agreed that omalizumab, with a better adverse-effect profile and apparent rapid mode of action could be considered innovative and that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see sections 4.20 and 4.21 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe

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		urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD).
British Association of Dermatologists (endorsed by Royal College of Physicians)	The first technology appraisal does not appear to have taken sufficient account of the following areas in its preliminary recommendation: 1. Impact of CSU on quality of life impairment: like other persistent skin diseases, such as psoriasis, CSU ranges in severity between patients and, to a lesser extent, within patients during the course of their illness. Like psoriasis, CSU may cause substantial problems with functioning, as well as work, home, social and personal life. The degree of impairment in quality of life can be assessed by the dermatology life quality index (DLQI), a well-characterized patient-related outcome measure. A score of 10 is used as a threshold value for defining the need for treating psoriasis patients with biologics when conventional therapies have failed. A comparable threshold score should be used to assess the need of patients with CSU who have failed to respond to second-generation H_1 antihistamines at above licensed doses. The mean (SD) overall DLQI score of patients recruited into the GLACIAL phase III study[1] was 13.1 (6.9) showing comparable life quality impairment with other inflammatory disorders affecting skin for which biological drugs have been approved by NICE. 2. The need for better treatments of antihistamine-refractory CSU: whilst H_1 antihistamines will control urticaria symptoms adequately in around 50% of patients and limited trial evidence indicates that up-dosing to fourfold may control up to 75% of patients, [2] the remaining 25% require third-line drugs, including immunosuppressants (e.g. ciclosporin, methotrexate) or anti-inflammatories (e.g. dapsone, short or long courses of oral corticosteroids) and respond with varying success. These drugs require patient attendance for regular hospital and GP monitoring and there is a significant risk of adverse effects. A very small number of these patients attending specialist urticaria clinics, respond very poorly or not all to all available treatments with consequent huge impairment in their quality of life (DLQI scores in excess of 20/30 despite best available treatment) and deserve better treatment outcomes. Omalizumab has been compared to “no pharmacological treatment” which in real clinic scenario is not really an option for an extremely symptomatic condition such as CSU. In practice, the real choice is between omalizumab	Comments noted. The Committee acknowledged the ‘immunosuppressant-sparing’ effect of omalizumab and agreed that omalizumab, with a better adverse-effect profile and apparent rapid mode of action could be considered innovative and that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see section 4.21 of the FAD). The Committee noted the apparent high utility value for the severe disease used in the model and concluded that some aspects of the quality-of-life impact may not be included in the EQ-5D (see section 4.16 of the FAD). The Committee acknowledged the ‘immunosuppressant-sparing’ effect of omalizumab and agreed that omalizumab, with a better adverse-effect profile and apparent rapid mode of action could be considered innovative and that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see section 4.21 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD). The Committee concluded that ciclosporin was an appropriate comparator in this appraisal but understood that, because of the lack of clinical

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	and immunosuppressants, and hence the comparison should be between these. Even though there is inadequate published data on the use of immunosuppressants in CSU, there is enough data on their side effects.	evidence, no formal comparison could be made (see section 4.4 of the FAD).
	3. Positioning of omalizumab in treatment pathways: there is currently no trial data to position omalizumab beyond H_1 antihistamines (with or without H_2 antihistamine, antileukotrienes or both). Because it has not been compared to single therapies, such as ciclosporin, or a combination of therapies beyond H_1 antihistamines, omalizumab is recommended as a third-line therapeutic option for patients who have not responded to up-dosed H_1 antihistamines in the latest international guidelines on urticaria.[3] The committee's view that omalizumab be considered in the same place as immunosuppressants in the treatment pathway (section 4.3) in the population of CSU patients included in the GLACIAL study is appropriate but it should be positioned as a third-line rather than a fourth-line option. Specialists need the flexibility to choose therapy for their patients on the basis of clinical appropriateness.	Comment noted. The Committee agreed that H_2 antihistamines are considered an out-of-date treatment for chronic spontaneous urticaria and concluded that omalizumab could be considered as a third- or fourth-line option in the pathway, in the same place as immunosuppressants (see section 4.4 of the FAD).
	4. Effectiveness of omalizumab on retreatment: (section 4.16) clinical experience at St John's Institute of Dermatology, London supports omalizumab having the same magnitude of effect during subsequent courses.	Following consultation, the Committee agreed that published observational studies, the pharmacokinetics of omalizumab and experience with omalizumab in severe persistent asthma supported an assumption of a constant treatment effect on repeated courses (see section 4.17 of the FAD).
	5. High proportion of complete responders to omalizumab: the experience of specialists in the tertiary urticaria clinic at St John's Institute of Dermatology, London has been to see a high proportion of treatment-refractory CSU patients showing a complete response to omalizumab. This is in line with a recent publication of real-life experience of treating CSU patients and other subtypes of chronic urticaria with omalizumab[4] which described a complete response in 83% of CSU patients and only a 7% failure rate. This is better than expected from analysis of the GLACIAL study data and may indicate higher cost-effectiveness. The cost-effectiveness model by the Southampton Health Technology Assessments Centre does not appear to adequately encompass the costs of the very considerable disease burden caused by steroids and ciclosporin – diabetes, weight gain resulting in osteoarthritis, osteoporotic fracture, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, renal impairment, hyperlipidaemia,	Comment noted. In this single technology appraisal, the economic model along with clinical evidence was submitted by the company (Novartis), and Evidence Review Group (Southampton Health Technology Assessments Centre) reviewed the company's submission. The Committee agreed that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see section 4.21 of the FAD).

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	etc. If these iatrogenic diseases were included it could change the balance of the calculation.	
	6. Clinical meaning of weekly urticarial activity scores: the mean baseline UAS7 score of 30 in GLACIAL corresponds to the highest severity health state (moderate-to-intense itch daily with multiple wheals [hives] every day) reflecting the severity of CSU in patients treated in that study. In real world practice, limiting eligibility for omalizumab to severe or moderate health states is pragmatic in view of the need for providing suitable facilities for monthly administration in health care centres and the drug cost.	Comment noted.The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD).
	7. Comparison of response rates in different phase III study populations: the slightly lower frequency of response of patients recruited into the GLACIAL study (33.7% complete response, 52.4% almost complete response (UAS7, 1-6) than patients with similar baseline characteristics recruited into the ASTERIA I and II studies (40% and 58.8% responses respectively, pooled data) probably reflects a harder-to-treat study population. A more favourable cost-effectiveness analysis of omalizumab in the ASTERIA I and II population (refractory to the licensed dose of a second generation H_1 antihistamine) seems likely at the possible expense of a larger eligible population.	Comment noted.
	8. Current limits and restrictions on eligibility for omalizumab: UK specialists were only able to seek funding approval for omalizumab from Primary Care Trusts up to 2011 by using Individual Funding Requests for the most severely affected chronic urticaria patients who remained highly symptomatic despite ongoing treatment with a basket of third-line therapies, including immunosuppressive drugs. A change in commissioning arrangements for omalizumab from individual PCTs to NHS England has seen a freeze in new commissioning decisions to date. The needs of the most severely affected treatment-refractory CSU patients have been recognized in a new commissioning policy that is due for final approval very shortly.	Comment noted. The Committee understood that clinicians would offer omalizumab only at specialist centres, and that the highly specialist allergy services of NHS England would fund omalizumab (see section 4.22 of the FAD).
	9. Summary: omalizumab is a new class of treatment for CSU that has no direct comparators. 'Treat the urticaria until it has gone,' is the objective of the 2014 guidelines.[3] No other treatment attains this objective in such a high	Comments noted. The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-

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	proportion of CSU patients unresponsive to currently available options. In practice, dermatologists are likely to use omalizumab in patients who are not suitable for or have significant side-effects from other immunosuppressants and would be happy with a barrier to qualification higher than the licence suggests. Denying omalizumab for patients with a condition which impacts so significantly on their quality of life seems completely illogical. **References** 1. Kaplan A et al. Omalizumab in patients with symptomatic chronic idiopathic/spontaneous urticaria despite standard combination therapy. J Allergy Clin Immunol 2013; 132:101-9. 2. Staevska M et al. The effectiveness of levocetirizine and desloratadine in 4-times conventional doses in difficult to treat chronic urticaria. J Allergy Clin Immunol 2010; 125:676-82. 3. Zuberbier et al. The EAACI/GA(2) LEN/EDF/WAO Guideline for the definition, classification, diagnosis, and management of urticaria: the 2013 revision and update. Allergy 2014; 69:868-87. 4. 4. Metz M et al. Omalizumab is an effective and rapidly acting therapy in difficult-to-treat chronic urticaria: a retrospective analysis. J Dermatol Sci 2014; 73:57-62.	effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD).
Royal College pf Pathologists	In reference to the first point, as to whether all relevant evidence has been taken into account, I note that under section 3.13 (non-randomised studies) the committee felt that such evidence may contain bias and should not be used in the appraisal. However given the limited evidence from randomised control trials (RTC) regarding long-term outcomes and optimum duration of treatment, I believe that the non-randomised studies should be included for consideration. Whilst it is evident from RTC that symptoms relapse after the withdrawal of omalizumab, information regarding the time to relapse is limited. It is evident from many of the published case series that omalizumab offers symptomatic relief, and that in most patients, symptoms re-occur once omalizumab is stopped (1-4). Although in the majority of patients this time interval is around 4-8 weeks, some remain symptom free for much longer periods of time. In addition, patients included in these earlier studies were likely to have more resistant disease, as demonstrated by the fact that many had failed ciclosporin before commencing omalizumab. This is the case with the use of omalizumab in the UK. Therefore, taking into account that a proportion of patients	Comment noted. Section 3.13 of the ACD did not refer to the Committee's considerations. It summarised the reasons given by the company for not comparing omalizumab with any of the potential comparators. Following consultation, the Committee agreed that patients who would have omalizumab before having immunosuppressants may have a longer relapse-free period and the probabilities for relapse estimated in the revised model for the immediate post-treatment period are plausible (see section 4.12 of the FAD).

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	will achieve long-term remission after their initial course of omalizumab, and that the selection of patients will not favour the more resistant phenotypes, it is likely that the overall use of omalizumab will be less than that anticipated from previous modelling. Another important point illustrated by these studies, is that many patients are able to discontinue all concomitant medications. So for example, in a cohort of 110 CSU patients treated across 9 different centres in Spain, 60% of patients stopped all other medications whilst on omalizumab (3). Similarly, patients described in a Canadian study demonstrated a significant reduction in their quantitative medication score, from 13.3 at the start of treatment with omalizumab, to 12.0 at 1 month, 9.2 at 3 months, 4.7 at 6 months, 5.3 at 12 months, and 3.0 at 18 months (4). This certainly reflects my own clinical observations of 45 CSU patients treated with omalizumab. It is disappointing that omalizumab has not been given a favourable recommendation for use in CSU. I must stress that this is the only medication that is currently effective for patients who have previously failed other treatments, including a range of immunosupressive therapies. If omalizumab were not available to such patents, they would continue to experience an extremely poor quality of life, to the serious detriment of their work and study. **References:** 1. Viswanathan RK, Moss MH, Mathur SK Retrospective analysis of the efficacy of omalizumab in chronic refractory urticaria. Allergy Asthma Proc. 2013 Sep-Oct;34(5):446-52. 2. Metz M, Ohanyan T, Church MK, Maurer M. Omalizumab is an effective and rapidly acting therapy in difficult-to-treat chronic urticaria: a retrospective clinical analysis. J Dermatol Sci. 2014 Jan;73(1):57-62. 3. Labrador-Horrillo M, Valero A, Velasco M, Jáuregui I, Sastre J, Bartra J, Silvestre JF, Ortiz de Frutos J, Gimenez-Arnau A, Ferrer M. Efficacy of omalizumab in chronic spontaneous urticaria refractory to conventional therapy: analysis of 110 patients in real-life practice.Expert Opin Biol Ther. 2013 Sep;13(9):1225 4. 4. Sussman G, et al. Real-life experience with omalizumab for treatment of chronic urticaria. Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol. 2014;112:170-174	The Committee noted that the model did not account for using fewer concomitant medications (such as H_1-antihistamines, LTRAs and H_2-antihistamines) or rescue treatments (such as corticosteroids), and taking these into account would decrease the ICER (see section 4.20 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD).
Royal College of Physicians	Overall, we believe that Omalizumab is safe and effective - sometimes very effective. Allied to this, it can be rapidly determined as to whether an individual responds to treatment. As such, our experts believe that it should be available for	Comment noted. The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients

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	those patients, with severe disease, who have had the condition for some time and which is unresponsive to the following, generally unsuccessful, treatments: • a combination of high dose H_1 blockers, H_2 blockers and LRTRA • tranexamic acid and low salicylate diets Some believe that Omalizumab should be tried before immunosuppressants - which they consider potentially life threatening and rarely appropriate for a condition which is generally self-limiting and carries no risk of mortality or permanent harm. Our experts believe that Omalizumab should only be available from specialist allergy and immunology centres or dermatology centres with sub-specialist expertise where a full assessment has been carried out.	who have severe urticaria (see section 4.21 of the FAD). The Committee understood that clinicians would offer omalizumab only at specialist centers, and that the highly specialist allergy services of NHS England would fund omalizumab (see section 4.21 of the FAD).
NHS England	Specialists working in tertiary urticaria clinics at St John's Institute of Dermatology, London and elsewhere have reported a high proportion of treatment-refractory CSU patients showing a complete response to omalizumab. This is in line with a recent publication of the real-life experience of treating CSU patients and other subtypes of chronic urticaria with omalizumab which described a complete response in 83% of CSU patients and only a 7% failure rate i.e. better than expected from analysis of the GLACIAL study data and which may indicate higher cost-effectiveness. *Metz M et al. Omalizumab is an effective and rapidly acting therapy in difficult-to-treat chronic urticaria: a retrospective analysis. J Dermatol Sci 2014; 73:57-62.* Experience with Biologics for the treatment of psoriasis suggests that if medication is stopped and then restarted efficacy may be lost. As a result, many patients remain on Biologics long term. Clinical experience at St John's Institute of Dermatology, London suggests that for Omalizumab, subsequent courses are equally effective (section 4.16). The slightly lower frequency of response of patients recruited into the GLACIAL study (33.7% complete response, 52.4% almost complete response (UAS7, 1-6) than patients with similar baseline characteristics recruited into the ASTERIA I and II studies (40% and 58.8% responses respectively, pooled data) probably reflects a harder-to treat study population. A more favourable cost-effectiveness analysis of omalizumab in the ASTERIA I and II population (refractory to the licensed dose of a second generation H_1 antihistamine) seems likely at the possible expense of a larger eligible population.	Comment noted. The Committee agreed that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see section 4.21 of the FAD). Following consultation, the Committee agreed that published observational studies, the pharmacokinetics of omalizumab and experience with omalizumab in severe persistent asthma supported an assumption of a constant treatment effect on repeated courses (see section 4.17 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22of the FAD).

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NHS England	The CRG consider the cost effectiveness summary reasonable. Regarding clinical effectiveness, the committees view is reasonable but in common with other conditions where there has not been a well-defined treatment pathway, comparative data will be hard to find. There is currently no trial data to position omalizumab beyond H_1 antihistamines (with or without H_2 antihistamine, antileukotrienes or both). Because it has not been compared to single therapies, such as ciclosporin, or a basket of therapies beyond H_1 antihistamines, omalizumab is recommended as a third line therapeutic option for patients who have not responded to up-dosed H_1 antihistamines in the latest international guidelines on urticaria [ref]. The committee's view that omalizumab could be considered in the same place as immunosuppressive drugs in the treatment pathway (section 4.3) in the population of CSU patients included in the GLACIAL study is considered appropriate (i.e. as a third line agent). Zuberbier et al. The EAACI/GA(2) LEN/EDF/WAO Guideline for the definition, classification, diagnosis, and management of urticaria: the 2013 revision and update. Allergy 2014; 69:868-87. The mean baseline UAS7 score of 30 in GLACIAL reflects the severity of CSU in patients treated in that study. In real world practice, limiting eligibility to omalizumab to severe or moderate health states is pragmatic. The additional information requested from the company is considered appropriate and relevant.	Comment noted.
NHS England	Omalizumab represents a significant advance in the management of chronic spontaneous urticaria (CSU), clinical trials and worldwide use to date showing that it is effective, safe and requires few screening investigations or safety monitoring in contrast to existing off-licence therapies that carry important risk profiles (immunosuppressive drugs and oral corticosteroids). In addition, it is also often effective for patients who have not responded to these other agents or in whom they are contraindicated. Like psoriasis, CSU may cause substantial problems with functioning, work, home, social and personal life. The degree of impairment in quality of life can be assessed by the dermatology life quality index (DLQI), a well-characterized patient related outcome measure. A score of 10 is used as a threshold value for defining the need for treating psoriasis patients with biologics when conventional therapies have failed. A comparable threshold score should be used to assess the need of patients with CSU who have failed to respond to second-generation H_1 antihistamines at above licensed doses. The mean overall DLQI score of patients recruited into the GLACIAL	The Committee acknowledged the 'immunosuppressant-sparing' effect of omalizumab and agreed that omalizumab, with a better adverse-effect profile and apparent rapid mode of action could be considered innovative and that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see section 4.21 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22of the FAD).

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	phase III study was 13.1 showing comparable life quality impairment with other inflammatory disorders affecting skin for which biological drugs have been approved by NICE. Studies suggest that H_1 antihistamines will control urticaria symptoms adequately in around 50% of patients and that up-dosing to fourfold may control up to 75% of patients. Staevska M et al. The effectiveness of levocetirizine and desloratadine in 4-times conventional doses in difficult to treat chronic urticaria. J Allergy Clin Immunol 2010; 125:676-82. The remaining 25% require third line drugs, including immunosuppressive drugs (e.g. ciclosporin, methotrexate) or anti-inflammatories (e.g. dapsone, short or long courses of oral corticosteroids) with varying success, regular hospital and GP monitoring and risk of adverse effects from their medication. In addition, a small number of these patients respond very poorly, or not all, to all available treatments with consequent huge impairment in their quality of life (DLQI scores in excess of 20/30 despite best available treatment). These patients deserve better treatment outcomes and are currently being denied effective and safe treatment. Although a patient access scheme may provide access for some patients, there is likely to be inequity of access until a final decision is made.	

Comments received from clinical experts and patient experts

Nominating organisation	Comment	Response
Allergy UK (patient expert)	After reading the information I was sent I do believe at this point that the relevant evidence has been taken into account. I do not think that sufficiently accurate and useful evidence was provided by the drug company but believe this to be the reason for the second meeting. From what I can understand not being a medical professional I think the clinical and cost effectiveness summary is a reasonable interpretation of the evidence. I think it does cover cost of alternatives, but to give an example. For the last year I have had to visit my GP weekly/monthly for blood test, urine test and blood pressure. I also have to go to the hospital ever 4 to 6 weeks for checkups and to get more medication. All this has a cost to the NHS which should be offset against the cost of Omalizumab. With regard the provisional recommendations, they are sound in that they are provisional and hopefully after the second meeting will be revised.	Comment noted. The Committee acknowledged the 'immunosuppressant-sparing' effect of omalizumab and agreed that omalizumab, with a better adverse-effect profile and apparent rapid mode of action could be considered innovative and that many beneficial effects of omalizumab were not fully captured in the estimation of health-related quality of life (see section 4.21 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD).

Nominating organisation	Comment	Response
	A sound and suitable basis for guidance to the NHS in my opinion would have to have to be based on the provision of Omalizumab for Chronic Urticaria that does not respond to H_1, H_2 and LRA's. On a personal note, I have after a year stopped taking ciclosporin to see if my condition has spontaneously gone into remission. It has not and unmedicated is severe. As the NHS cannot provide Omalizumab for me at this point (if ever) I have no alternative but to go back on ciclosporin despite the side effects I suffer with the medication. Currently I am not responding as well to the Ciclosporin and despite a higher dose still have moderately severe hives. In my opinion there are no further treatment options for patients such as myself if NICE do not approve Omalizumab for this condition. If Omalizumab was recommended for the treatment of Chronic Urticaria I think that some provision should be made within the NHS guidance to account for those who will need it long term so that continuity of treatment can be maintained. It is pointless providing a patient with Omalizumab for 6 months if they are then expected to go a further period of 1 to 5 months without the drug (they would then have to rely on steroids to control severe symptoms). This is the system currently and while patients may become totally hive free in the 6 months they are on the drug they will relapse and be back to square one when the drug is stopped. A short break of a few days is usually enough for a patient to know that they have not had spontaneous remission. I am sure I have reiterated some points here but as a patient expert rather than a clinician I am trying to ensure I cover the use of the drug from a patient's perspective as well as answering the above questions.	
Royal College of Pathologists and Novartis (clinical expert)	In reference to the first point, as to whether all relevant evidence has been taken into account, I note that under section 3.13 (non-randomised studies) the committee felt that such evidence may contain bias and should not be used in the appraisal. However given the limited evidence from randomised control trials (RTC) regarding long-term outcomes and optimum duration of treatment, I believe that the non-randomised studies should be included for consideration. Whilst it is evident from RTC that symptoms relapse after the withdrawal of omalizumab, information regarding the time to relapse, is limited. It is evident from many of the published case series that omalizumab offers symptomatic relief, and that in most patients, symptoms re-occur once omalizumab is stopped (1-4). Although in the majority of patients this time	Comment noted. Section 3.13 of the ACD did not refer to the Committee's considerations. It summarised the reasons given by the company for not comparing omalizumab with any of the potential comparators. Following consultation, the Committee agreed that patients who would have omalizumab before having immunosuppressants may have a longer relapse-free period and the probabilities for relapse estimated in the revised model for the immediate post-treatment period are plausible (see section 4.13 of the FAD).

Nominating organisation	Comment	Response
	interval is around 4-8 weeks, some remain symptom free for much longer periods of time. In addition, patients included in these earlier studies were likely to have more resistant disease, as demonstrated by the fact that many had failed ciclosporin before commencing omalizumab. This is the case with the use of omalizumab in the UK. Therefore, taking into account that a proportion of patients will achieve long-term remission after their initial course of omalizumab, and that the selection of patients will not favour the more resistant phenotypes, it is likely that the overall use of omalizumab will be less than that anticipated from previous modelling. Another important point illustrated by these studies, is that many patients are able to discontinue all concomitant medications. So for example, in a cohort of 110 CSU patients treated across 9 different centres in Spain, 60% of patients stopped all other medications whilst on omalizumab (3). Similarly, patients described in a Canadian study demonstrated a significant reduction in their quantitative medication score, from 13.3 at the start of treatment with omalizumab, to 12.0 at 1 month, 9.2 at 3 months, 4.7 at 6 months, 5.3 at 12 months, and 3.0 at 18 months (4). This certainly reflects my own clinical observations of 45 CSU patients treated with omalizumab. It is disappointing that omalizumab has not been given a favourable recommendation for use in CSU. I must stress that this is the only medication that is currently effective for patients who have previously failed other treatments, including a range of immunosupressive therapies. If omalizumab were not available to such patents, they would continue to experience an extremely poor quality of life, to the serious detriment of their work and study. References: 1. Viswanathan RK, Moss MH, Mathur SK Retrospective analysis of the efficacy of omalizumab in chronic refractory urticaria. Allergy Asthma Proc. 2013 Sep-Oct;34(5):446-52. 2. Metz M, Ohanyan T, Church MK, Maurer M. Omalizumab is an effective and rapidly acting therapy in difficult-to-treat chronic urticaria: a retrospective clinical analysis. J Dermatol Sci. 2014 Jan;73(1):57-62. 3. Labrador-Horrillo M, Valero A, Velasco M, Jáuregui I, Sastre J, Bartra J, Silvestre JF, Ortiz de Frutos J, Gimenez-Arnau A, Ferrer M. Efficacy of omalizumab in chronic spontaneous urticaria refractory to conventional therapy: analysis of 110 patients in real-life practice.Expert Opin Biol Ther.	The Committee noted that the model did not account for using fewer concomitant medications (such as H_1-antihistamines, LTRAs and H_2-antihistamines) or rescue treatments (such as corticosteroids), and taking these into account would decrease the ICER (see section 4.20 of the FAD). The Committee was persuaded that omalizumab could be considered to be a cost-effective use of NHS resources only for patients who have severe urticaria (see section 4.22 of the FAD).

Nominating organisation	Comment	Response
	2013 Sep;13(9):1225 4. Sussman G, et al. Real-life experience with omalizumab for treatment of chronic urticaria. Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol. 2014;112:170-174	

Comments received from commentators

No comments received from the commentators

Comments received from members of the public

Role*	Comment	Response
Patient	I have had this condition for over 5 years now and I recently had the worst attack I have ever had which caused me to scratch so much my body was bleeding all over. I have had various levels of the attack before and have usually taken anti histamine. After about 30 minutes the attack goes and the skin returns to normal, but not on this occasion, looking at this document I wonder if the new drug would be able to help me with my urticaria.	Comment noted. The Committee noted that chronic spontaneous urticaria is characterised by persistent itching, which can interfere with activities of daily living and sleep and, in severe cases, can be unbearable, disabling and considerably affects quality of life (see section 4.1 of the FAD).
Patient	I have suffered with urticaria for over three years. At first, it was a mild annoyance but more recently it has caused a great deal of discomfort, suffering and mental anguish in my day to day life. It is a condition which affects not just the body, but also the mind. Worrying about when an attack will strike, or how long it will last, and how long medication (antihistamines) will keep it at bay takes its toll. The result is that urticaria can be exhausting, and often leaves me feeling quite hopeless. I have tried different antihistamines, diets and supplements to try to ease my symptoms, but none of them have rid me of urticaria permanently, or provided more than a few hours' relief.	Comment noted. The Committee noted that chronic spontaneous urticaria is characterised by persistent itching, which can interfere with activities of daily living and sleep and, in severe cases, can be unbearable, disabling and considerably affects quality of life (see section 4.1 of the FAD).

* When comments are submitted via the Institute's web site, individuals are asked to identify their role by choosing from a list as follows: 'patent', 'carer', 'general public', 'health professional (within NHS)', 'health professional (private sector)', 'healthcare industry (pharmaceutical)', 'healthcare industry'(other)', 'local government professional' or, if none of these categories apply, 'other' with a separate box to enter a description.

Role*	Comment	Response
	Any new treatments would be welcomed, and I'm sure that many other sufferers will feel the same way - this condition is a constant worry, not something which is easily managed, especially at first, and has effects far beyond the physiological.	
Patient	I have suffered with Severe Atopic Eczema since childhood. This has been particularly bad in adult life and despite gaining professional qualifications; I have struggled with poor sleep due to severe itching at night, and despite being heavily sedated with anti-histamines to try to help me sleep. This led to problems and dangers driving the next morning, Eventually, I became ill with severe depression and had to stop working when my condition became very serious. I see a consultant dermatologist every six months and use the whole range of emollients, topical cortico-steroids (TCS) and immunomodulator calcineurin Inhibitors (Tacrolimus) as well as the most heavily sedating anti-histamines. I have refuently asked to be referred to the specialist allergy clinic as I have a very high IgE and have allergic responses to a wide range of things including House dust / dust mite / moulds, grasses,pollens etc. I have not been able to access any services for immunotherapy - which might help the associated conditions I suffer from - Acute Rhinitis and Allergic Asthma, as well as the Severe Atopic Eczema. I have helped in various studies when I could but despite Southampton UH being a centre of excellence and research, I frankly feel let down by the lack of access to the allergy clinic for even a consultation, and for the very take it or leave it approach, rather than some specialist immunotherapy, which I understand is available for more limited allergies, and which I feel benefitted me in the past when I tried some privately. I have digressed slightly, but if there is any potential for this drug to relieve itching for urticaria, then I'm sure this would also help the itching in Severe Atopic Eczema. I would ask that this drug be made available to help mitigate and reduce the nightly misery of itching and poor or no sleep, and the daily misery of itching and soreness, and visible tiredness in front of family and colleagues, which can limit the activities of a family and the start of the day, after a nightmare of a night.	Comment noted. The Committee can only make recommendations within the marketing authorisation of the drug.
Patient	If it would help for me to give more details about what this means from the perspective of a patient I would be more than happy to do so.	Comment noted.

Role*	Comment	Response
Carer	3yr old son just diagnosed, Cetirizine and Chloraphenamine do not completely take itch away.	Comment noted.
NHS professional (consultant dermatologist)	I am a consultant dermatologist with an interest in urticaria and have been running a tertiary clinic for the management of patients with refractory urticaria in the North West of England for over ten years. I have been asked to speak in national and international meetings on the treatment of difficult urticarias. I have received travel assistance, speaker fees and registration fees from Novartis and have also acted as a consultant to them in the past. With regard to the technology appraisal I would like to make some specific comments: I am disappointed that the committee is minded not to recommend omalizumab as I do see the drug as a great option for a condition that brings misery on many. The emerging real world data do seem to corroborate the phase III trial data that indicate the effectiveness of the drug. The current alternatives include an array of unlicensed immunosuppressive drugs that require many hospital appointments for monitoring and are frequently unsuccessful. I would agree that omalizumab does not appear to be a disease modifying drug and that continued treatment will be required until natural remission f the condition, provided the treatment is working. The proposed way of identifying responders by drop in UAS7 is acceptable. UAS7 correlated very well with DLQI in the phase III trials. It's reasonable to give 6 months of treatment then stop, and wait until UAS7 goes above 15 again: this is in my current protocol for treatment of patients in Manchester. At present I am continuing background medications including H_1 antihistamines and leukotriene inhibitors, although I am mindful that colleagues report that patients frequently discontinue these as omalizumab is so effective. I hope these comments are helpful to the panel.	Comment noted. The Committee recommended omalizumab for patients with severe urticaria at baseline whose condition has not responded to treatment with H_1 antihistamines, with or without leukotriene receptor antagonists (see sections 1.1 and 4.22 of the FAD).
NHS Professional	It would be very helpful clinically of NICE could support the use of Omalizumab in the small number of patients who have very severe CSU, which has proved refractory to treatment with multiple other drugs, including other immunosuppressants. In my experience, Omalizumab has made a significant improvement to patients' symptoms/quality of life and reduces need/cost of other medications.	Comment noted. The Committee recommended omalizumab for patients with severe urticaria at baseline whose condition has not responded to treatment with H_1 antihistamines, with or without leukotriene receptor antagonists (see sections 1.1 and 4.22 of the FAD).

Role*	Comment	Response
Consultant Allergist	I think Omalizumab would be a very useful option to try in some of our severe chronic urticaria/angiodema patients. This consultation document would be of immense help in prescribing this drug in NHS.	Comment noted. The Committee recommended omalizumab for patients with severe urticaria at baseline whose condition has not responded to treatment with H_1 antihistamines, with or without leukotriene receptor antagonists (see sections 1.1 and 4.22 of the FAD).
Consultant Dermatologist	I have used this in 2 patients resistant to several immunosuppressants (on an individual funding basis) - the results have been life transforming	Comment noted. The Committee acknowledged that most people who receive omalizumab experience a dramatic and rapid improvement (see section 4.21 of the FAD)