NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

Response by SANE to Appraisal consultation document on guidance on using Vortioxetine for treating major depressive episodes

The importance of choice for patients

There is a paucity of choice for people suffering from severe depression. This is a condition which can have debilitating negative effects, for example on cognition, which can affect not only an individual's quality of life but the ability to work, and can cause some people to be at risk of suicide. We are told by those contacting us that despite all the promises made about choice of treatments, patients are still given very little choice in medication.

Greater choice and more tolerable side effects for the individual than those often associated with existing medications are of paramount importance to a person undergoing a major depressive episode. The side effects of existing drugs can limit a patient's willingness to take medication, compromise adherence, and inhibit persistence in continuing with the treatment.

SANE is not in a position to judge the clinical efficacy and cost-effectiveness of any one medication. We would argue strongly, however, that any new drug using different chemical pathways which offered relief from the negative effects of major depressive episodes, in particular on cognition, and had better-tolerated side-effects, would be important in improving treatment outcomes and be more than welcome to patients.

We believe that any medication which adds to the armoury of treatment available is worth a close study of the benefits to patients and the risks associated with its not being available as a potential treatment. If Vortioxetine were proven to be a clinically effective treatment for major depressive episodes in adults, and cost-effective, it would enable doctors to offer a wider choice of medications and could have a transformative effect on some patients.