

Bortezomib for previously untreated mantle cell lymphoma

Information for the public

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What has NICE said?

Bortezomib (Velcade) is recommended as a possible treatment for adults with mantle cell lymphoma that has not been treated before, if haematopoietic stem cell transplantation is not suitable for them.

What does this mean for me?

If you have mantle cell lymphoma, and your doctor thinks that bortezomib is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Bortezomib should be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance being issued.

Why has NICE said this?

NICE looks at how well treatments work in relation to how much they cost compared with other treatments available on the NHS.

Bortezomib was recommended because the benefits to patients justify its cost.

The condition and the treatment

Mantle cell lymphoma is a rare form of a type of cancer called non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. It happens when the body makes abnormal white blood cells – these are cells in the blood that fight infection. The abnormal white blood cells don't work properly, so they can't fight infection like normal white blood cells do.

The most common symptom is a painless swelling in the neck, armpit or groin. Other symptoms may include tiredness, weight loss, night sweats and high temperatures (fevers).

Mantle cell lymphoma is usually treated with high doses of chemotherapy drugs, and another type of drug called rituximab. The aim is to kill the cancer cells, but the treatment also kills the stem cells in the bone marrow (a soft, spongy material found inside bone). Stem cells are immature blood cells made by the bone marrow, that can develop into mature blood cells. In haematopoietic stem cell transplantation, stem cells are collected from the blood of the patient or a suitable donor and stored until they are needed. When the patient has stopped having chemotherapy, the stem cells are put into a vein through a drip to replace the cells that the treatment has killed.

High-dose chemotherapy and stem cell transplantation are not suitable for everyone. Bortezomib is a possible alternative treatment option, given in combination with other drugs. It is given by injection, or into a vein through a drip. It is a drug that makes cancer cells die.

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) may be a good place to find out more.

Sources of advice and support

- Lymphoma Association, 0808 808 5555
www.lymphomas.org.uk
- Bloodwise (previously Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research), 0207 504 2200
www.bloodwise.org.uk

- Delete Blood Cancer, 0208 747 5620
www.deletebloodcancer.org.uk
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0800 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk
- Cancer Research UK Patient Information (previously CancerHelp UK), 0207 242 0200
www.cancerresearchuk.org

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Accreditation

