Healthcare Improvement Scotland | SMC Advice on new medicines

www.scottishmedicines.org.uk

Decision Explained

Medicine: pembrolizumab (brand name: Keytruda®)

Merck Sharp & Dohme (UK) Limited

The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) has assessed pembrolizumab for treating adults and children aged 3 years and older, with relapsed and refractory classical Hodgkin lymphoma. It is used where an autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT, a type of transplant used to replace the bone marrow with the patient's own stem cells) has failed, or two other treatments have failed if the patient cannot have an ASCT. This document summarises the SMC decision and what it means for patients.

What has SMC said?

After careful consideration, SMC has accepted pembrolizumab for the treatment of classical Hodgkin lymphoma as described above, for restricted use. The restriction means that treatment with pembrolizumab can be continued for up to two years.

This SMC advice takes into account a confidential discount offered by the pharmaceutical company that improves the cost-effectiveness of pembrolizumab.

What does SMC's decision mean for patients?

If your healthcare professional thinks that pembrolizumab for use as described above is the right medicine for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS in Scotland.

What is pembrolizumab used for?

Pembrolizumab is used for the treatment of classical Hodgkin lymphoma, which is a type of blood cancer. In lymphomas a type of white blood cell called lymphocytes become abnormal and start to grow out of control. Pembrolizumab is used to treat patients where the lymphoma is relapsed (has come back after treatment), or refractory (is not responding to treatment). It is used when an ASCT has failed to treat it, or where the patient cannot have an ASCT and has failed two other sets of treatment.

How does pembrolizumab work?

Pembrolizumab is an immunotherapy. This is a type of cancer treatment that stimulates the immune system (the body's natural defence system) to fight the cancer. Some cancer cells produce proteins that switch off immune cells called T-cells. Pembrolizumab attaches to a protein on the T-cells called

PD-1. This stops the cancer from switching off the T-cells, helping the immune system fight the cancer.

How does SMC make its decision?

SMC carefully considers every new medicine to make sure it benefits patients and is considered to be an acceptable use of the limited resources in NHSScotland.

To do this SMC considers the following:

- Evidence from the company about how well the medicine works compared with current treatments available in Scotland, in relation to how much they will cost to buy and administer.
- The potential impact of the medicine on patients and carers.
- Advice from healthcare professionals about any benefits of the new medicine compared to current treatment, along with how the new medicine is likely to be used.

When SMC assesses a medicine it takes account of the needs of all patients in NHSScotland, not only those who may be treated with the medicine under consideration.

You can find more detailed information about the SMC assessment of pembrolizumab by looking at the SMC Detailed Advice Document (SMC2380).

More information

The organisation below can provide more information and support for people with lymphoma and their families. SMC is not responsible for the content of any information provided by external organisations.

Lymphoma Action

 https://lymphoma-action.org.uk  0808 808 5555

You can find out more about pembrolizumab (Keytruda®) in the European public assessment report (EPAR) summary for the public by searching for the medicine name on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website.

 https://www.ema.europa.eu/en