

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 65/09 TA 172

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**

**Subject: Technology Appraisal No 172 – Head
and Neck Cancer (squamous cell carcinoma) –
Cetuximab**

Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 65/2009

For action by:

Chief Executive of HSC Board – **for distribution to:**

- Director of Performance Management & Service Improvement
- Director of Commissioning
- Assistant Directors of Commissioning
- Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management
- Family Practitioner Services Leads – for cascade to relevant Family Practitioner groups

Chief Executive of Public Health Agency – **for distribution to:**

- Director of Public Health
- Director of Nursing

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**

- Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff
- Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff
- Heads of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant staff
- Directors of Acute Services – for cascade to relevant staff
- HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

For Information to:

- Chair of HSC Board
- Chair of Public Health Agency
- Chairs of HSC Trusts
- Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority
- Chief Executive Patient and Client Council
- Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA
- Chief Executive, NICPLD
- Chief Executive, NIPEC
- Chair, RMSG

Summary of Contents:

Cetuximab in combination with platinum-based chemotherapy is not recommended for the treatment of recurrent and/or metastatic squamous cell cancer of the head and neck.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:
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SGU-NICEGuidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Date of Issue: 20 November 2009

Related documents:

See Bullet Point 4 below

Superseded documents

Status of Contents:

Action

Implementation:

Immediate

Additional copies:

Available to download from

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-guidance.htm>

Dear Colleagues

Technology Appraisal No 172 - Head and Neck Cancer (squamous cell carcinoma - Cetuximab)

Cetuximab in combination with platinum-based chemotherapy **is not recommended** for the treatment of recurrent and/or metastatic squamous cell cancer of the head and neck.

People currently receiving cetuximab in combination with platinum-based chemotherapy for the treatment of recurrent and/or metastatic squamous cell cancer of the head and neck should have the option to continue treatment until they and their clinician consider it appropriate to stop.

DHSSPS advises that this guidance is valid for Northern Ireland and endorses it for implementation in HSC.

The full NICE technology appraisal is available for download at:

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA172>

The HSC sector also should note that;

1. The Department expects HSC organisations to implement this appraisal with **immediate effect**.
2. This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case.
3. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/TA172> and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice.
4. NICE has developed related guidance and this can be accessed as follows:

Published post link with NICE from 1 July 2006:

Cetuximab for the treatment of locally advanced squamous cell cancer of the head and neck. NICE technology appraisal guidance 145 (2008). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/TA145

Published pre 1 July 2006:

Improving outcomes in head and neck cancers: the manual. NICE cancer service guidance (2004). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/csghn

All NICE guidance endorsed by the Department to date can be accessed on the DHSSPS website at: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sqsd-guidance-nice-guidance>

Circular HSS (PPMD) (NICE) 01/06 issued on 30 June 2006 provides further information on the Northern Ireland process for reviewing NICE guidance and further details on the local status of the Institute's guidance. This circular can be accessed at:

http://dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice_guidance_01-06.pdf

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael McBride". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer