

Prostate cancer drug given initial 'no' for NHS in England

8 June 2018



Credit: Cancer Research UK

A prostate cancer drug has been provisionally rejected as a first-line treatment on the NHS in England.

The draft recommendation from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) means abiraterone (Zytiga) won't be made routinely available for men with newly diagnosed [prostate cancer](#) that has spread to other parts of the body.

As it stands, the NHS in England can only prescribe abiraterone for these men once standard hormone treatment or chemotherapy has failed.

Results from recent clinical trials have shown that giving abiraterone alongside steroids and [hormone therapy](#) as a first-line treatment can reduce the chance of the cancer coming back and improve survival compared to hormone therapy alone.

Sir Harpal Kumar, Cancer Research UK's chief executive, called the decision "disappointing". "Two [clinical trials](#) published last year provided compelling evidence of the huge potential benefit of abiraterone for these patients," he said.

What does the decision mean?

NICE published its draft recommendation this week, rejecting abiraterone as a first-line therapy. The committee concluded they couldn't accurately estimate the drug's cost effectiveness based on the data submitted.

The drug's manufacturer, Janssen, can now submit additional data, which will be reviewed later this summer before a final decision is reached.

A NICE spokesperson told The Telegraph : "We understand that some men with prostate [cancer](#) will be disappointed by today's news.

"However, we can only recommend drugs that are clinically effective and show value for money compared to current treatment options. In this case, [abiraterone](#) has fallen short."

Kumar urged NICE and Janssen to work together quickly to provide the information that will allow the drug to be recommended.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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