



Mesothelioma Information
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Mesothelioma Articles

UK to Reconsider Use of Alimta

December 21, 2006 - The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the United Kingdom has decided to reconsider the blocking of Alimta, a drug used to treat those who are suffering from [mesothelioma](#), an asbestos-related cancer for which Alimta shows the most promise of any on the market.

Earlier this year, NICE officials chose to block the use of the drug, citing prohibitive costs. Their decision was met with much disdain by mesothelioma victims and their families as well as cancer advocacy organizations. The drug manufacturer, Eli Lilly, appealed the ruling.

NICE now says they will begin to conduct a review of their decision. The announcement, says the BBC, was met with much joy by mesothelioma victims, who are often not diagnosed until the late stages of their disease. Alimta is currently the only FDA approved drug for this cancer and the one that has been most successful in slowing its progress.

"The appeal mechanism is one of a series of checks and balances built into our appraisal process," said NICE official Dr. Gillian Leng. "It ensures that we issue the right guidance to the NHS, based on the correct interpretation of the evidence. Today's decision shows that these checks and balances work effectively."

Joanne Rule, chief executive of the charity Cancerbackup, agreed. "We are very pleased that NICE will be looking at this important treatment again, following the recent appeal," she noted. "Resulting from exposure to asbestos, mesothelioma takes a long time to develop and when the cancer is diagnosed, patients often have a very poor prognosis. As a cancer with very few treatment options, we hope Nice will approve this treatment which helps to control symptoms such as pain and can give patients vital extra months."

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