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PRESS RELEASE

NICE approves docetaxel as a treatment option for men with advanced prostate cancer

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today issued guidance to the NHS in England and Wales recommending the use of docetaxel as a treatment option for men with prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of their body and is no longer responding to treatment with hormonal therapies (known as hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer).

Docetaxel is a chemotherapy agent licensed for use in combination with the corticosteroids prednisone or prednisolone for the treatment of hormone-refractory prostate cancer. The NICE guidance recommends the use of docetaxel as a treatment option where the patient is well enough to care for himself with occasional assistance. The guidance further recommends that docetaxel should be stopped at the completion of planned treatment of up to 10 cycles, or if severe adverse events occur or if the disease progresses.

Prostate cancer is the most common male cancer in the UK and the second most common cause of male cancer deaths, with over 9000 deaths in England and Wales in 2003. It has been estimated that most of these deaths are in patients with hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer. The growth of most prostate cancers is stimulated by the hormone testosterone. For men whose prostate cancer has spread, or metastasised, hormonal therapies that modify levels of, or responses to

testosterone are initially effective (in about 80% of cases), but after about 18 months the disease usually becomes unresponsive to hormone treatment and will progress.

Professor Peter Littlejohns, Clinical and Public Health Director at NICE and Executive Lead for the guideline, said: “Unfortunately, hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer cannot be cured, however our assessment showed that docetaxel is a cost effective way to offer patients additional months of life.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

About NICE

1. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.
2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - **public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
 - **health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS
 - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.