South Central Priorities Committees
(Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth PCTs)

Policy Recommendation 86: **Bexarotene for refractory cutaneous T-cell lymphoma**

Date of issue: **September 2010**

The Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth Priorities Committee has considered the evidence for the use of bexarotene for cutaneous T-cell lymphoma. Funding for the treatment is LOW PRIORITY because of lack of evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness.

Cutaneous T-cell lymphoma is a rare condition in which malignant lymphocytes aggregate in the skin. Treatment often produces prolonged survival with good disease control, but is seldom curative.

Bexarotene is a drug to treat patients whose disease is progressing despite earlier systemic treatment. We found one small randomised controlled trial of low-dose versus higher-dose bexarotene. It had a number of weaknesses, but indicated that the higher dose may be more effective. A small non-randomised retrospective comparison of bexarotene with all-trans retinoic acid reported no significant differences in response rates, median survival or event-free survival. Several non-comparative studies confirm that some patients respond to bexarotene, but provide no information on how its performance compares with alternative treatments or no treatment. Bexarotene causes adverse events in nearly every patient, and some are serious. Bexarotene costs an average of about £24,000 per patient per year. The drug does not appear to be cost-effective enough for use in the NHS.

NOTES:

1. *Exceptional circumstances may be considered where there is evidence of significant health impairment and there is also evidence of the intervention improving health status.*
2. *This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or guidance from NICE.*