



722 Prince of Wales Road
Darnall
Sheffield
S9 4EU

Email: SHECCG.LTCportfolio@nhs.net

Telephone: 0114 305 1056

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Dear GPs

Re: Reducing Premature Mortality in Post Menopausal Women with Breast Cancer

We are writing to prepare you for the introduction of ibandronic acid (50 mg tablets) as part of the routine management of post menopausal women with breast cancer in Sheffield to reduce recurrence and premature mortality.

You may already be aware that a large collaborative meta-analysis (>18,000) led by Prof. Rob Coleman an Oncologist in Sheffield was published in the Lancet last year to clarify the risks and benefits of adjuvant bisphosphonate treatment in breast cancer. The absolute reduction with bisphosphonate use in postmenopausal women at 10 years was 3.0% for breast cancer recurrence (from 25.8%), 3.4% for distant recurrence (from 21.2%), 2.2% for bone recurrence (from 8.8%) and 3.3% for breast cancer mortality (from 18.0%). This is relative reduction in mortality of approximately one sixth.

The full study can be accessed here -

[www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)60908-4/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)60908-4/abstract)

NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group has agreed a business case to introduce bisphosphonates into the breast cancer pathway for post menopausal women to reduce premature mortality in Sheffield. The agreement is to introduce zoledronic acid infusions in secondary care alongside chemotherapy and daily oral ibandronic acid thereafter for a total of 3 years. Practically this will require GPs to continue to prescribe ibandronic acid for this particular cohort of women as part of their routine follow on care. For those unable to tolerate oral ibandronic acid provision has been made for ongoing infusions of zoledronic acid, but it is expected that this cohort will be minimal.

Bisphosphonates are currently not licensed for this indication. The 'off licence' use of ibandronic acid 50 mg tablets has been approved by the Medicines Safety Committee at Sheffield Teaching Hospital and work has been undertaken with the specialist team, including Professor Rob Coleman who led the meta-analysis, to develop prescribing



guidance. The guidance has been approved by the Sheffield Area Prescribing Group and can be found here –

http://www.intranet.sheffieldccg.nhs.uk/Downloads/Medicines%20Management/prescribing%20guidelines/Guideline%20ibandronic%20acid%20in%20breast%20cancer_final.pdf

Yours faithfully



Dr Anthony Gore

Associate Clinical Director

NHS Sheffield CCG

