



For media

Date of release: Tuesday 26 August 2008

“TREATING MYELOMA IN ENGLAND, WALES & SCOTLAND 2008”

A summary report

Background

UK research exploring the attitudes of haematologists in England, Wales and Scotland towards treatment options in myeloma, with particular focus on the restrictions affecting the use of novel drugs (such as lenalidomide and bortezomib), was commissioned by Myeloma UK, supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Celgene Ltd. The research was carried out in May 2008 and a summary of the key findings now follows.

Research methodology

Telephone interviews were carried out with 103 myeloma specialists in England, Wales and Scotland in May 2008. The 103 respondents included: 49 consultants and 54 registrars. Each respondent interviewed represented a different hospital.

Results

A snapshot view

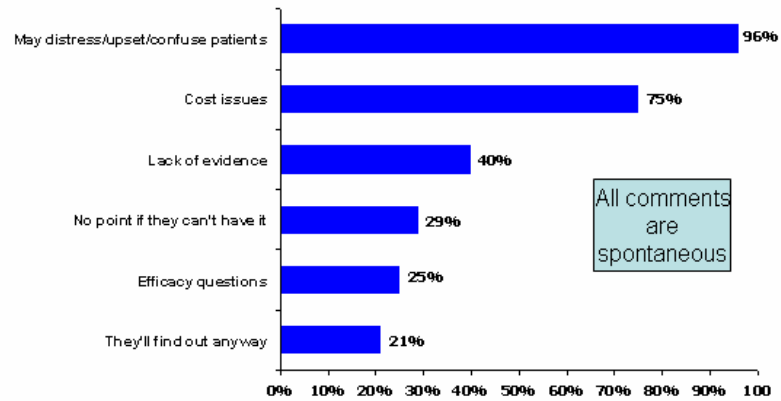
- **NHS bureaucracy is potentially putting cancer patients' life at risk** with **three-quarters of doctors** saying that **the process for obtaining a treatment** not on their hospital formulary takes **at least a month**; longer than suitable for a patient with a serious form of cancer such as myeloma
- **1 in 4 doctors keeps their myeloma patients in the dark** about all potential treatment options
- **Three-quarters of doctors** receive **no guidance from their** hospitals on how to discuss treatments, not yet officially approved by NICE, with their myeloma patients

Informing patients about treatment options

- 74% of doctors surveyed feel that all patients with myeloma should be made aware of all suitable treatment options, even if the treatments are **not** easily available on the NHS

- However, 1 in 4 doctors choose not to discuss all suitable treatment options for their myeloma patients if the treatment is affected by NHS access issues, in an attempt to spare them from distress

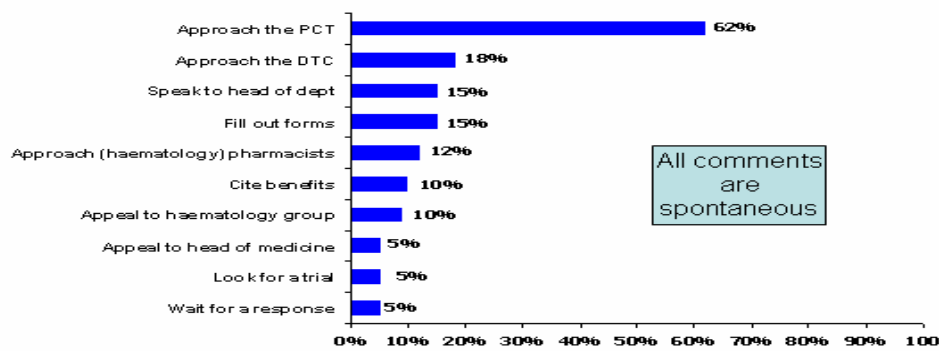
Reasons why should patients not be made aware of all treatment options



Treatment access

- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of doctors have been in a situation where the preferred treatment option for their patient was not funded by the NHS, with cost cited as the main reason for the funding difficulty
- A fifth of doctors believe that difficulties in prescribing certain treatments in myeloma are completely 'out of their hands' and that they have no control over the situation.
- Doctors are most likely to approach their PCT to try to obtain a treatment for their myeloma patient that is not on their hospital formulary

Processes gone through by a doctor to try to obtain a particular treatment not on the hospital formulary



- Three-quarters of all doctors do not receive any guidance from their hospital on discussing treatments that have not yet been officially approved by NICE with their patients
- Almost three-quarters of doctors said that the process for obtaining a particular treatment for their patient (if not approved by their hospital) takes at least a month, a potentially unacceptable timeframe for patients with serious cancers

Length of time the process takes to obtain a treatment not on the hospital formulary

