

Our Ref: ID 1708

NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
Marriss House
Hamilton Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 5AL
Tel: 0151 651 0011

Re: Freedom of Information Request – Biologics Pathways

Thank you for your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which was received into this office on 30th June 2020.

You Asked for:

Please can you send me your biologic pathways for patients with rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis.

Can you also please clarify what is the maximum number of biologics that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will commission for patients with rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis before an Individual Funding Request (IFR) needs to be submitted?

Our Response:

The Pan Mersey Area Prescribing Committee (APC) position regarding number of biologics for rheumatoid arthritis (RA), psoriatic arthritis (PsA) and ankylosing spondylitis (AS) has been approved by all of the Mersey Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's), which includes: Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Southport & Formby, South Sefton, St Helens Warrington and Wirral CCGs.

The RA pathway as published on APC website lists the different classes of biologic/high cost agent to assist in choosing a different mechanism of action where there is inefficacy of an agent or an adverse effect. Where treatment fails due to primary inefficacy, the pathway allows up to total of 6 sequential options. For secondary inefficacy the only restriction is the statement "Avoid using more than two anti-Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) agents".

The PsA and Peripheral Spondyloarthropathy pathway does not mention a specific number of lines of therapy, it just lists the different classes of biologic/high cost agent to assist in choosing a different mechanism of action where there is inefficacy of an agent or an adverse effect. There is no reference to Individual Funding Requests (IFR's) on the pathway. The prescribing policy statement for Psoriatic Arthritis: Sequential use of High Cost Agents states "Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this statement may be considered on an individual basis where their GP or consultant believes exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the rule of this policy. In this situation, follow locally defined processes.

The AS and Non Radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis pathway limits to 3 lines of treatment for AS where treatment has failed due to primary inefficacy. For secondary inefficacy the only restriction the only restriction is the statement “Avoid using more than two anti-TNF agents.” There is no reference on the pathway to IFRs. The prescribing policy statement for use of biological agents in the management of AS and non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis states that “Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this statement may be considered on an individual basis where their GP or consultant believes exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the rule of this policy. In this situation, follow locally defined processes.”

The pathways are available on the Pan Mersey APC website and have been reviewed in the light of the Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee (RMOC) guidance around sequential use of biologic drugs. However, the work on this was paused due to COVID. Please see below for a link to the Pan Mersey website:

<https://www.panmerseyapc.nhs.uk/>

We hope this information is useful, however if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Corporate Affairs Team (contact details at the top of this letter)

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