

## Photodynamic Therapy for Age-Related Macular Degeneration

<b>Date:</b>	February 2002	<b>Date of Last Review:</b>	New Policy
<p><b>Policy:</b> It is the responsibility of referring and treating clinicians to ensure compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Photodynamic therapy for macular degeneration will only be considered for funding when all of the criteria below are met. For patients who meet the criteria a Group Prior Approval (GPA) form should be completed – click <a href="#">here</a> to access the GPA form.</p> <p>For patients who do not meet the criteria, a funding request form will need to be completed and submitted to the Exceptional Cases Team – (click <a href="#">here</a> to access the form).</p> <p><b>Criteria for patients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subfoveal and/or juxtafoveal choroidal neovascularisation secondary to age related macular degeneration.</li> <li>• Predominantly 'classical' features.</li> <li>• Visual acuity 6/60 or better.</li> <li>• Lesions smaller than or equal to 5400µm.</li> </ul> <p>Commissioners will need to ensure criteria for provider units are met.</p> <p><b>Criteria for provider units:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sub regional centre with retinal expertise and access to stereoscopic fluorescein angiography.</li> <li>• Participating in a systematic and ongoing evaluation supported by an appropriate clinical study protocol.</li> <li>• Participates in the SERNIP reporting system (for adverse events).</li> </ul>			

**Definition:** Macular degeneration is a relatively common disorder of the eye among the older population. It causes significant morbidity due to loss of central vision, for which there is currently no safe and effective treatment. Photodynamic therapy is a treatment which uses a combination of a photoreactive chemical and illumination from a laser source, to treat the new vessel formation in the retina associated with this disease. This treatment appears to reduce visual loss in a specific group of patients, but will not improve vision.

**Estimated number of people affected:** It is estimated that 40-100 people per 1,000,000 will potentially be able to benefit from this treatment. This suggests there may be approximately 30 – 75 people eligible for treatment within Cambridgeshire Health Authority.

<b>Resource implications:</b>	Estimates for numbers requiring treatment range from 40-100 people per 1,000,000 population. Each patient requires on average 6 treatments over 2 years. This implies 30-75 Cambridgeshire residents per year, or 180 – 450 treatments. The current cost per treatment has been estimated at £1,600, based on a Liverpool business case including all supporting costs (the drug itself costs £800 per treatment). The cost of treating all eligible people in Cambridgeshire would, therefore, be in the region of £288,000 – £720,000 per annum, depending on the estimate used.
<b>Health benefits:</b>	From one large multi-centre randomised trial, results suggest that if a subgroup of patients, with >50% neovascular macular degeneration, are treated according to trial protocols, only two people need to be treated to prevent one person losing 3 or more lines of vision over one year. This may allow maintenance of independence in an elderly person. However, results are not yet available for more than two years of follow up. NICE has included this therapy on its formal work programme and is due to report in July 2002, but a policy is needed for the interim period.
<b>Risks:</b>	Due to the short follow up time of the only existing trial, it is not possible to confidently predict the risks. There have been some instances of early visual loss after treatment, although this does not appear to be significant and, in general, the rate of adverse events in the trial was low. The main risk is the assumption of efficacy over time when this has not yet been fully demonstrated.
<b>Priority:</b>	Low priority treatment, except for those people fulfilling the outlined criteria for whom benefit has been shown.

## GLOSSARY(ref 5)

<b>Choroid:</b>	vascular layer of tissue underlying the retina.
<b>Macular:</b>	pertaining to the macula, an area of the retina of the eye with the ability to produce a high level of visual acuity (ie distinguish objects clearly).
<b>Neo-vascularisation:</b>	the formation of new blood vessels.
<b>Photodynamic:</b>	altered by light.
<b>Retina:</b>	tissue lining the inside of the eye, containing cells which are sensitive to light. Information is passed from the retina to the optic nerve, where images are transmitted to the brain.
<b>SERNIP:</b>	safety and Efficacy Register of New Interventional Procedures, set up under the auspices of the Academy of Royal Medical Colleges in 1996.
<b>Subfoveal/juxtafoveal:</b>	under or near to the fovea, the central area of the macula.

## REFERENCES:

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3. Royal College of Ophthalmologists Guidelines for Photodynamic Therapy, October 2000. [http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/photodynamic\\_therapy.html](http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/photodynamic_therapy.html)
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5. Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary. 27<sup>th</sup> Edition. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia 1988