

UK NICE gives nod to apixaban for DVT prevention

NOVEMBER 25, 2011 Sue Hughes

London, UK - The UK's **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence** (NICE) has published final draft guidance recommending NHS reimbursement for the use of **apixaban** (Eliquis, Bristol-Myers Squibb/Pfizer) as an option for the prevention of venous thromboembolism (VTE) in adults who have undergone planned total hip or total knee replacement surgery [1,2].

The committee concluded that apixaban was more clinically effective and cheaper than **enoxaparin** (Lovenox, Sanofi Aventis). It also concluded that there was insufficient clinical evidence to determine whether or not apixaban was more or less clinically effective than **rivaroxaban** (Xarelto, Bayer/Johnson & Johnson) and **dabigatran** (Pradaxa, Boehringer Ingelheim).

The draft guidance has been sent to the formal consultees for appraisal who have 15 working days to consider whether they wish to appeal against it. Subject to appeal, the draft guidance will be used as the basis for final guidance.

Professor Carole Longson, Director of the NICE Health Technology Evaluation Centre (London, UK), said: "We are pleased to have been able to produce final draft guidance on the use of apixaban just six months after it received its license for the prevention of VTE in patients who have undergone planned hip and knee surgery."

"The NICE clinical guideline 'Venous thromboembolism: reducing the risk' recommends that people having elective hip replacement or elective knee replacement surgery should be offered low-molecular-weight heparin, dabigatran etexilate, rivaroxaban, or fondaparinux to prevent VTE," she explained. "Although apixaban had only been directly compared with one of the options recommended by the clinical guideline—enoxaparin, a low-molecular-weight heparin—the committee was satisfied that apixaban is a clinically and cost-effective option for preventing blood clots, alongside other effective treatments already recommended by NICE."

NICE further notes that without anticoagulant prophylaxis the prevalence of DVT ranges from 41-85% after elective knee surgery and 42-57% after elective hip surgery. The prevalence of DVT with pulmonary embolism is up to 0.9-28% in hip replacement and up to 1.5-10% in knee replacement.

Apixaban costs £17.15, £34.30, and £102.90 for packs of 10, 20, and 60 tablets. The cost of treatment is estimated to be £41.16 for knee replacement surgery (based on 12 days' treatment) and £116.62 for hip replacement surgery (based on 34 days' treatment).