

Plain English Summary

Talquetamab for relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma

What does the guidance say?

Talquetamab is not recommended for government funding for patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma who have had at least three previous treatments. It is not subsidised and cannot be claimed under MediShield Life.

What is multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma is a type of blood cancer that causes plasma cells to grow uncontrollably and form abnormal “myeloma cells” in bone marrow. As the number of myeloma cells increases, there is less room for healthy blood cells, causing bone pain, fatigue, and making patients more susceptible to infections.

Patients who have symptoms will usually receive a combination for different medicines. Treatment aims to reduce the number of myeloma cells to as few as possible (this is called remission). However, sometimes the cancer can come back after treatment (relapsed) or continue to worsen despite treatment (refractory). In these instances, a different treatment will be needed.

What is talquetamab?

Talquetamab belongs to a group of targeted medicines called monoclonal antibodies. It works by attaching to a protein called GPRC5D on cancer cells and a protein called CD3 on immune cells, bringing them together so the immune system can attack the cancer. It is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneously).

Why was it not recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Talquetamab was not recommended for funding because its benefits for patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma do not justify its costs. If you need talquetamab for this condition, you can speak to a medical social worker to find out if there is financial assistance available to help with the cost of treatment.

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Is this the right treatment for me?

There are different types of treatments available for multiple myeloma. Your doctor may recommend talquetamab if they consider it is the most suitable treatment for you. They should give you clear information, listen to your views and concerns, and talk to you about your treatment options.

Some of the questions you may want to ask your doctor when making decisions about your care are:

- How will the treatment affect my day-to-day activities?
- How well does it work compared to other treatments?
- What are the side effects and risks of treatment, and how likely are they?
- How much does the treatment cost, and who can I approach if I want to find out whether there is financial assistance available to help with the cost of treatment?
- How long will I need to be on the treatment for?
- What happens if the treatment stops working?
- What happens if I do not want to have treatment?

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