



Medicine: ruxolitinib (brand name: Jakavi®) for polycythaemia vera

Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd

What is ruxolitinib for?

Ruxolitinib is used to treat polycythaemia vera (PV), which is a rare and incurable cancer where too many red blood cells are produced by the body. This causes the blood to thicken and reduces blood flow to the major organs and can also cause blood clots. Ruxolitinib is for treating adults with PV where the patient cannot be treated with a medicine called hydroxyurea (also known as hydroxycarbamide), or where it has not worked.

How does ruxolitinib work?

Ruxolitinib works by blocking a group of enzymes known as Janus kinases (JAKs), which are involved in the production and growth of blood cells. By blocking JAKs, ruxolitinib reduces the abnormal production of blood cells in PV, which may reduce the symptoms of the disease.

What has SMC said?

SMC has accepted ruxolitinib for the treatment of PV as described above.



Why has SMC said this?

SMC looks at how well new medicines work compared with current treatments available in Scotland and in relation to how much they will cost to buy and administer (for example, if the medicine has to be given at a clinic or side effects have to be monitored).

SMC carefully considers every new medicine to make sure it benefits patients and is considered to be an acceptable use of the limited resources in NHSScotland. When SMC assesses a medicine it takes account of the needs of all patients in NHSScotland, not just those who may be treated with the medicine under consideration.

To do this SMC consider the following:

- Clinical trial and economic evidence from the company that makes the medicine.
- Advice from healthcare professionals about any benefits of the new medicine compared to current treatment, along with how the new medicine is likely to be used.
- Information from patient groups about the potential impact of the medicine on patients and carers.

After careful consideration, applying extra flexibility because ruxolitinib is a medicine for a rare condition and after receiving a confidential discount from the company, SMC was able to accept it as a possible treatment within NHSScotland.

What does SMC's decision mean for me?

If your healthcare professional thinks that ruxolitinib for use as described above is the right medicine for you, you should be able to have your treatment on the NHS in Scotland. For further information see:

Medicines in Scotland: What's the right treatment for me?

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/medicinesbooklet.aspx



More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with PV and their families. SMC is not responsible for the content of any information provided by external organisations.

Bloodwise



<https://bloodwise.org.uk/>



0808 800 6000

Leukaemia CARE



<https://www.leukaemiacare.org.uk/>



0808 8010 444

MPN Voice



<http://www.mpnvoice.org.uk/>



07934 689 354

You can find out more about ruxolitinib in the European public assessment report (EPAR) summary for the public by searching for the medicine name on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website.



<http://www.ema.europa.eu>

Date advice published: 9 December 2019

SMC No: (SMC2213)