



Medicine: ropeginterferon alfa-2b (brand name: Besremi®)

AOP Orphan Ltd

The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) has assessed ropeginterferon alfa-2b for the treatment of adult patients with polycythaemia vera, who do not have symptoms from an enlarged spleen (symptomatic splenomegaly). This document summarises the SMC decision and what it means for patients.

What has SMC said?

After careful consideration, SMC has not recommended ropeginterferon alfa-2b for treating adults with polycythaemia vera as described above.

SMC was unable to accept ropeginterferon alfa-2b because the evidence provided by the company was not strong enough to satisfy the committee that it offers value for money to NHSScotland. This was despite using a more [flexible approach](#)* in the assessment, as it is for a rare condition.

What does SMC's decision mean for patients?

Rpeginterferon alfa-2b should not normally be prescribed on the NHS in Scotland for use as described above. If a patient's healthcare professional thinks a particular patient would benefit from it, they can make a request to prescribe ropeginterferon alfa-2b. All health boards have procedures in place to consider these requests. For further information see:

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

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/medicinesbooklet.aspx



What is ropeginterferon alfa-2b used for?

Rpeginterferon alfa-2b 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. Symptoms are caused by the blood being thicker due to there being too many blood cells and can include: headaches, fatigue, dizziness, visual disturbances, itchiness and a condition called erythromelalgia (this causes episodes of burning pain and redness in the feet, hands arms and legs). PV also increases the long-term risk of developing myelofibrosis and secondary acute myeloid leukaemia.

How does ropeginterferon alfa-2b work?

Rpeginterferon alfa-2b is a type of interferon, which are proteins produced naturally by the body as part of the immune response. Rpeginterferon alfa-2b binds to interferon receptors (targets) on cells

*<https://www.scottishmedicines.org.uk/how-we-decide/pace/>

in the bone marrow. This causes the bone marrow to produce fewer red blood cells, helping to control the PV. Ropoginterferon alfa-2b is also 'pegylated' (attached to a chemical called polyethylene glycol) which helps it stay in the body for longer.

How does SMC make its decision?

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.

To do this SMC considers the following:

- Evidence from the company about how well the medicine works compared with current treatments available in Scotland, in relation to how much they will cost to buy and administer.
- Information from patient groups about the potential impact of the medicine on patients and carers.
- 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.

When SMC assesses a medicine it takes account of the needs of all patients in NHSScotland, not only those who may be treated with the medicine under consideration.

You can find more detailed information about the SMC assessment of ropoginterferon alfa-2b by looking at the SMC Detailed Advice Document (SMC2421).

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.

Leukaemia Care



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



08088 010 444

MPN Voice



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



07934 689 354

You can find out more about ropoginterferon alfa-2b (Besremi®) in the Patient Leaflet by searching for the medicine name on the electronic medicines compendium (EMC) website.



<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>