

Press Release



Embargoed until 0900 on Tuesday 13 January 2015

UVEAL MELANOMA GUIDELINES AWARDED NICE ACCREDITATION

First UK guidance will lead to improvements in the care and treatment of patients with this rare form of cancer, which occurs in the eyes and often spreads to the liver

Melanoma Focus announced today that its recently-completed national guidelines for uveal (ocular) melanoma have been awarded formal accreditation by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Melanoma Focus has funded the project. The guidelines were developed over the past three years by the group of experts, aided by patient representatives. The result is a comprehensive set of recommendations, based on the best available scientific evidence. It is expected to enhance patient care and improve counselling and informed decision-making, while helping clinicians gain a better understanding of outcomes.

Dr Paul Nathan, who led the Guideline Development Group, said:

‘This was an intricate and lengthy process which has resulted in the first set of clinical guidelines for this disease in the UK. We invited comments from professionals and the public in mid-2014 by means of a consultation process and are now delighted to have received the accolade of formal accreditation following an exhaustive evaluation by NICE.

‘I am grateful to all those who contributed; in particular, the Uveal Melanoma Guideline Development Group, consisting of eminent professionals involved in delivering care to uveal melanoma patients, who gave their time unstintingly and free of charge.

‘We now have an officially-approved standard of care which will guide clinicians and, above all, help to improve the treatment of patients suffering from this disease.’

Professor Martin Underwood, Chair of the NICE’s Accreditation Advisory Committee, said:

‘I am delighted to congratulate the Uveal Melanoma Guideline Development Group for this accreditation.

‘I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the group on their high level of patient involvement during guideline development.

‘It is very pleasing for me to see a small specialist guideline producer such as the Uveal Melanoma Guideline Development Group embrace the NICE Accreditation Programme; a programme that can help them to ensure that the information they produce is as good as it can possibly be.’

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Notes for Editors

Uveal melanoma is a rare disease, with an incidence of approximately 2-8 people per million per year in Caucasians, while it is even less common in races with brown eyes. Both sexes are affected in equal numbers. The age at presentation peaks at around 60 years (except for iris melanomas, which usually present at a younger age). More than 90% of cases involve the choroid, with the remainder confined to the iris and ciliary body.

Risk factors for uveal melanoma include light-coloured irides, congenital ocular melanocytosis, melanocytoma and neurofibromatosis. The role of sunlight is uncertain and it has been found that familial cases are very rare, with a few families carrying germline mutations of the BAP1 gene on chromosome 3. This predisposes them to develop uveal melanoma, mesothelioma and other cancers.

The uveal melanoma guideline development group reviewed the evidence for the key areas of uncertainty in this field, which include:

- The use and effectiveness of new technologies such as cytogenetics/genetic analysis for prognostication;
- The appropriate pathway for the surveillance of patients following treatment for primary uveal melanoma;
- The use and effectiveness of new technologies in the treatment of hepatic recurrence; and
- The use of systemic treatments.

A summary of the Uveal Melanoma National Guidelines is available on the Melanoma Focus website: <http://melanomafocus.com/activities-2/um-guidelines-project>. This includes a list of all authors. A full version of the guidelines and supporting papers have been posted for the use of clinicians and others with an interest in uveal melanoma.

For more information contact Dr Paul Nathan, Chair of the Uveal Melanoma Guidelines Development Group, who is a consultant medical oncologist at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, Northwood, HA6 2RN. Queries should be directed to Dr Nathan on 07956 675772. Alternatively, please contact Simon Rodwell, CEO of Melanoma Focus, on rodwell@melanomafocus.com or 07867 808889.

Melanoma Focus is a medical and scientific charity providing information to patients and carers, while being involved in public education and scientific research. It assists the professional development of clinicians, scientists, nurses and others with an interest in melanoma, including GPs, and organises the UK's principal annual melanoma conference.

The charity is also a professional membership organisation and an active participant in official and industrial advisory groups. It commissions and resources projects to investigate aspects of melanoma medicine, with most of its funds devoted to scientific studies, developing clinical guidelines for various forms of melanoma and campaigning on issues such as the need for early diagnosis.

For more about Melanoma Focus's work visit <http://melanomafocus.com> and <http://fundraising.melanomafocus.com>.

Terminology: 'uveal melanoma' and 'ocular melanoma' are interchangeable but the former is now more commonly used.

13 January 2015