



MEDIA ALERT - BREAKTHROUGH CANCER TREATMENT A STEP CLOSER TODAY.

EMBARGO: 10:00 TUESDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Interviews available with Dr Vinod Joshi, founder of the Mouth Cancer Foundation

To set up an interview please call Media Ambitions on 020 8940 2222.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today issued a preliminary positive recommendation (Appraisal Consultation Document) for the use of cetuximab (Erbix[®]) in combination with radiotherapy for the treatment of locally advanced head and neck cancer¹.

Cetuximab in combination with radiotherapy can be used as an alternative in Mouth Cancer patients for whom chemoradiotherapy is inappropriate. The Appraisal Committee accepted that cetuximab plus radiotherapy caused less severe adverse effects than the platinum-based chemoradiotherapy regimens. Currently both carboplatin and cisplatin are used for chemoradiotherapy in the United Kingdom with horrific side effects.

This news follows the Mouth Cancer Foundation's successful appeal to the Appeal Panel of NICE to ask its Appraisal Committee's to reverse its previous appraisal decision not to recommend the drug for head and neck cancer patients in England and Wales in May 2007.

Dr Vinod Joshi of the Mouth Cancer Foundation said, *"This is a happy day for people living with locally advanced head and neck cancer in England and Wales and the Mouth Cancer Foundation is pleased that we are one step closer in ensuring that cetuximab will be available to them. For many years, the treatment options for this devastating disease have been limited. The availability of cetuximab will be the first significant treatment advance since the 1950s for head and neck cancer. It offers the right patients significant improvements in local control of the disease and survival"*.

The Mouth Cancer Foundation represents the views of its members constituting a wide population of patients with mouth cancer.

-ENDS-

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. NICE ACD on Erbitux (Erbitux) in the treatment of locally advanced head and neck cancer. February 2008.

The Mouth Cancer Foundation is a registered charity no. 1109298.

Cancer can occur in any part of the mouth, tongue, lips, throat, salivary glands, pharynx, larynx, sinus, and other sites located in the head and neck area. In its very early stages, Mouth Cancer can be almost invisible making it easy to ignore.

Symptoms include:

1. A sore or ulcer in the mouth that does not heal within 3 weeks
2. A lump or overgrowth of tissue anywhere in the mouth
3. A white or red patch on the gums, tongue, or lining of the mouth
4. Difficulty in swallowing, chewing or moving the jaw or tongue
5. Numbness of the tongue or other area of the mouth
6. A feeling that something is caught in the throat
7. A chronic sore throat or hoarseness that persists more than 6 weeks
8. Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable
9. Neck swelling present for more than 3 weeks
10. Unexplained tooth mobility persisting for more than 3 weeks

More information about Mouth Cancer is available at the Mouth Cancer Foundation website www.mouthcancerfoundation.org or by emailing info@mouthcancerfoundation.org
