



New KEYTRUDA® evidence in lung cancer reduces risk of death by 50%

April 20, 2018, New KEYTRUDA® (pembrolizumab) plus chemotherapy evidence presented at the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) meeting this week; showed a 50 percent* reduction in the risk of death compared to chemotherapy alone, for advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients.¹

Paul Smith, MSD New Zealand Director, says, “This is great news for non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients. NSCLC kills more New Zealanders than melanoma, breast cancer and prostate cancer combined and is our biggest cancer killer.”²

The phase 3 trial of 616 patients; reviewed KEYTRUDA in combination with pemetrexed and chemotherapies (cisplatin or carboplatin) for untreated advanced nonsquamous non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).¹

The trial showed the estimated overall survival at 12 months was 69.2 percent** in the KEYTRUDA combination group versus 49.4 percent*** in the pemetrexed plus platinum chemotherapy group.¹

Mr Smith says, “This trial supports the rationale for combining KEYTRUDA with chemotherapy in NSCLC.

“KEYTRUDA was funded for advanced melanoma in September 2016, and we made a NSCLC funding application to PHARMAC that same month. We know over a 1,000 New Zealand lung cancer patients could benefit from KEYTRUDA and these people have now waited longer than melanoma patients to gain funded access to KEYTRUDA.”³

Lung cancer also has a significant impact on Maori compared to the non-Maori population with rates 3 to 4 times higher in Maori men and women.²

Mr Smith says, “Currently only those who can afford to pay for private cancer care are accessing KEYTRUDA for lung cancer. This is inequity in action which is creating a two tier health system.

“We are working with PHARMAC and I am pleased these clinical trial results further reinforce the evidence for KEYTRUDA in NSCLC. Our focus is ensuring all patients gain access to KEYTRUDA as quickly as possible, as they do not have time to wait.

“Patients wanting to access KEYTRUDA now should seek advice from their cancer specialist about the options that may benefit them.”

-ENDS-

References

1. Gandhi et al, Pembrolizumab plus chemotherapy in metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer. NEJM April 2018
2. Lung Foundation New Zealand website. Last accessed April 2018
3. MSD Data on file

* Hazard ratio for death is 50 percent which is based on 0.49 (95% CI, 0.38 to 0.64; P<0.001). At a median follow up of 10.5 months, of all patients reviewed, the risk of death in the KEYTRUDA combination group was 50 percent that of the chemotherapy combination group

** (95% confidence interval [CI], 64.1 to 73.8)

** (95% CI, 42.1 to 56.2)

KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) 50mg powder for infusion

KEYTRUDA is a **Prescription Only Medicine**

Use: KEYTRUDA is used:

- in the treatment of melanoma which cannot be removed by surgery alone or when it has spread to multiple sites in the body.
- in the treatment of a kind of lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).
- in the treatment of classical Hodgkin Lymphoma (cHL)
- in the treatment of urothelial carcinoma, including bladder cancer

Side effects: Immune-mediated side effects including inflammation of the lungs, colon, liver, kidneys, pituitary gland, brain, eye, muscles, nervous system, pancreas, and heart, thyroid disorders, type 1 diabetes mellitus. Severe skin reactions including Steven-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis. Severe infusion reactions including hypersensitivity and anaphylaxis. Transplant recipients: rejection of a transplanted organ, graft-versus-host-disease (in people with a bone marrow transplant using donor cells). Very common side effects include diarrhea, nausea, itching, rash, joint pain, back pain, feeling tired, cough, patches of discoloured skin, stomach pain, decreased levels of sodium in blood. Tiredness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, shortness of breath, rash, itching, headache, hair loss, and, infections of the upper respiratory tract were reported when given in combination with chemotherapy. You may experience more than one side effect at the same time.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Talk to your doctor to see if KEYTRUDA is right for you. KEYTRUDA is a funded medicine for melanoma patients—restrictions apply. KEYTRUDA is an unfunded medicine for NSCLC, cHL and urothelial carcinoma patients. Ask your health professional the cost of the medicine and any other medical fees that may apply. Use only as directed and if symptoms continue or you have side effects, see your doctor, pharmacist, or health professional.

Based on data sheet prepared 25 January 2018. Marketed by: Merck Sharp & Dohme (New Zealand) Limited, Newmarket, Auckland. For additional product information, consult the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI), available on request, phone 0800 500 673 or refer to the Medsafe website www.medsafe.govt.nz.

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