

5 February 2019

Pertuzumab used as adjuvant treatment for HER2 positive breast cancer

Approved at meeting of Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (COHERE) on 5 February 2019

Recommendation by COHERE		Pertuzumab is not included in the national regimen of medicines used for early-stage HER2 positive breast cancer in combination with chemotherapy and trastuzumab for adult patients who have undergone surgery.
Grounds	Severity and prevalence of the health issue	Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women in Finland. The age-standardised incidence of breast cancer is now 2,3 times higher than it was 40 years ago. In 2015, breast cancer was diagnosed in 5,191 persons in Finland, of whom 30 were men and 5,161 women. In the same year, 841 women died of breast cancer. Of breast cancer tumours, at most 15% are HER2 positive.
	Treatment options	In accordance with the Finnish clinical guidelines, early-stage HER2 positive breast cancer is treated with 6 to 8 cycles of chemotherapy given every three weeks and by giving HER2 antibody drug trastuzumab usually for one year. Adjuvant treatment of early-stage breast cancer often includes radiotherapy and/or several years of hormonal therapy.
	Effectiveness	Including pertuzumab in the adjuvant treatment of early-stage HER2 positive breast cancer slightly reduced (at most 3.2 percentage points depending on the type of disease) the risk of recurrence during a four-year monitoring period. Information is not yet available on the effects of adjuvant treatment with pertuzumab on the length of patients' survival. Patients in the group receiving pertuzumab and those in the control group receiving standard treatment did not report marked differences in quality of life.
	Safety	Based on the study under review, patients who had received pertuzumab suffered from diarrhoea more than patients in the control group. Both groups reported approximately the same number of other adverse effects.
	Costs and impact on the budget	As adjuvant treatment for early-stage HER2 positive breast cancer, pertuzumab is given in combination with chemotherapy and trastuzumab every three weeks for a year. Including pertuzumab in the adjuvant treatment of early-stage HER2 positive breast cancer would more than double the cost of a one-year treatment of a patient (EUR 76,000) compared with the costs arising from the use of chemotherapy and trastuzumab only (EUR 29,300). If approximately 200 patients' standard treatment in Finland was complemented by a one-year course of pertuzumab as an adjuvant treatment, the annual additional cost of the treatment would be about EUR 9.3 million.
	Ethical and financial aspects as a whole	In relation to alternative medicines, pertuzumab's clinical effects are minor, the risk of adverse effects is slightly higher, and the costs are high in relation to the benefits.
Diagnosis (ICD-10) codes		C50 Breast cancer
Background information and references		Evaluation report by Fimea (in Finnish with English summary), COHERE memorandum (in Finnish)