

Plain English Summary

Cabotegravir with rilpivirine for treating Human Immunodeficiency Virus type 1 (HIV-1) infection

What does the guidance say?

Cabotegravir with rilpivirine is not recommended for government subsidy for individuals living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus type 1 (HIV-1) infection.

Why was it not recommended for subsidy?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Cabotegravir with rilpivirine was not recommended for government subsidy because its benefits for individuals living with HIV-1 infection do not justify its costs compared with subsidised alternative treatment options. If you need cabotegravir with rilpivirine, you can speak to a medical social worker to find out if there is other financial assistance available to help with the cost of treatment.

What is HIV-1 infection?

HIV-1 is the most common type of HIV, a virus that infects white blood cells and reduces the body's ability to fight infections. It spreads through certain body fluids from an individual with HIV-1 who is not on effective treatment, such as through unprotected sex, sharing contaminated needles and syringes, receiving infected blood or blood products, or from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

Some individuals may not have any symptoms when they are newly infected with HIV-1. However, others may develop flu-like symptoms such as fever, night sweats, skin rash, mouth ulcers, sore throat, muscle aches, weight loss, and tiredness.

HIV-1 infection is treated with a combination of drugs called antiretroviral therapy to reduce the amount of HIV in the blood (viral load). Without early and effective treatment, the virus will multiply gradually and weaken the body's immune system, causing advanced disease where people can become sick easily from potentially life-threatening infections or cancers.

What are cabotegravir and rilpivirine?

Cabotegravir belongs to a group of antiretroviral drugs called integrase strand transfer inhibitors and rilpivirine belongs to a group called non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors. They prevent HIV-1 from multiplying and reduce the amount of HIV-1 (viral load) in the body. Cabotegravir and rilpivirine are given as injections into the muscle (intramuscularly). Before receiving the injections, both drugs may need to be taken orally to see if they are tolerable.

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Which treatment is right for me?

There are different types of treatments available for HIV-1 infection. Your doctor may recommend you have cabotegravir with rilpivirine if they consider that it is more suitable for you. Your doctor should give you clear information, listen to your views and concerns, and talk to you about your treatment options.

Some of the questions you may want to ask your doctor when making decisions about your care are:

- How will the treatment affect my day-to-day activities?
- How well does it work compared to other treatments?
- What are the side effects and risks of treatment, and how likely are they?
- How much does the treatment cost?
- How long will I need to be on the treatment for?
- What happens if the treatment stops working?
- What happens if I do not want to have treatment?

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This summary is not, and should not be regarded as, a substitute for professional or medical advice. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare professional about any medical condition.

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