

NCPE Assessment

Plain English Summary

July 2026

Drug name: Pembrolizumab (pronounced *pem-broh-LIH-zoo-mab*) in combination with carboplatin and paclitaxel for the first line treatment of advanced or recurrent endometrial carcinoma in adults who are candidates for systemic therapy

Brand name: Keytruda®

HTA ID: HTA ID24049

What is the NCPE?

The National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) is a team of experts who look at the health benefits and costs of medicines. The HSE asks us to advise on whether or not a new medicine is good value for money. We give unbiased advice to help the HSE provide the most effective, safe and cost-effective (value for money) treatments for patients.

How do we make our recommendations?

Our main focus is on the health benefits and cost effectiveness of a medicine. We look at the wider costs and health benefits associated with a new medicine, for example:

- Does the new medicine work better than other treatments available in Ireland?
- Is the new medicine easier to give or easier to take compared with other treatments available in Ireland?
- Does the new medicine reduce the need for patients to be hospitalised?
- Does the new medicine improve the quality of a patient's life over other treatments available in Ireland?
- Will the new medicine save resources elsewhere within the health system?

We review the information from clinical trials along with the cost and value for money data presented by the pharmaceutical company. We ask doctors and other healthcare professionals for advice about any health benefits of the new medicine compared with current treatments. We also ask patient organisations to send us their views on how the new drug may improve patients' day-to-day experience of living with a disease.

What is pembrolizumab used for?

Pembrolizumab is a cancer medicine used to treat many different types of cancer. In this submission we are considering the use of pembrolizumab in adult patients with endometrial carcinoma, a cancer of the lining of the womb. These cancers are advanced, have spread or returned or cannot be removed by surgery. In addition, the tumours can have genetic alternations and are determined to be either mismatch repair deficient (dMMR) or proficient (pMMR). For this indication, pembrolizumab is used in combination with carboplatin and

paclitaxel (these are both other cancer medicines, and are called chemotherapy).

What recommendation has the NCPE made to the HSE?

We have recommended that the HSE should consider funding pembrolizumab for patients with endometrial carcinoma whose tumours have been determined as pMMR if its cost-effectiveness (value for money) can be improved.

We have recommended there is insufficient information available to advise the HSE on funding pembrolizumab for patients with endometrial carcinoma whose tumours have been determined as dMMR. The HSE will consider our recommendation and make the final decision about reimbursement (funding). When making the funding decision, the HSE will also consider the additional [criteria](#) outlined in the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013.

We have received a Patient Organisation Submission from the Irish Society for Gynaecological Oncology about pembrolizumab and shared it with the HSE. This submission will form part of the data that the HSE considers.

Why did we make this recommendation?

We have completed a full health technology assessment of pembrolizumab. We recommend that the HSE consider providing this medicine if the HSE can agree a suitable price reduction with the pharmaceutical company. We believe pembrolizumab may work as well or better than other ways to manage endometrial carcinoma with pMMR tumours in adults. However, the price of the medicine is too high compared with other ways to manage this condition, and we believe that the medicine is not value for money.

Next steps

When the HSE receives our recommendation, it will look at all the relevant data about pembrolizumab. The HSE makes the final decision on reimbursement.

Where can I get more information?

You can get more information about pembrolizumab from the following online options:

- the NCPE Technical Summary Document
- Keytruda European Public Assessment Report (EPAR) – [Summary for the public](#)
- searching for pembrolizumab on our website (www.ncpe.ie);
- searching for pembrolizumab on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website (www.ema.europa.eu).

Please refer to the NCPE website for updated information on the reimbursement status of this medicine