The clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of treatments for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis: a systematic review and economic evaluation

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a serious lung condition of unknown cause that scars and stiffens
the lung tissue; it generally affects people over 60 years old. The main symptoms are shortness of
breath and a cough, and as the disease progresses there is a considerable impact on day-to-day life.
Few treatments are available. We evaluated the benefits and harms of available treatments by considering
the most up-to-date, high-quality evidence, using a systematic approach. Searches for evidence from
11 databases were made and evidence was reviewed by two authors, using predefined criteria, to
consider its relevance. All included studies were assessed for their quality, and data from each study were
extracted into a standardised template. A narrative review and statistical methods to combine study data
were applied. A statistical model was developed to compare the cost-effectiveness of pharmacological
interventions for the treatment of IPF. Standard methods were used.

Fourteen studies were included in the review of clinical effectiveness. These evaluated six drugs and three
non-pharmacological interventions. Results were mixed. There are few treatments which have a significant
benefit. Harms from these treatments were not significant in most cases. Treatments are unlikely to
be considered cost-effective. There were few studies on interventions in symptom management and
palliative care. Further research is required in a number of areas including the effects of symptom control
interventions and an inhaled therapy. A number of ongoing studies are yet to report and these may
provide further evidence for the best approach to take for treating IPF.
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