TRAPEZE: a randomised controlled trial of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of chemotherapy with zoledronic acid, strontium-89, or both, in men with bony metastatic castration-refractory prostate cancer

Nicholas James,1,2* Sarah Pirrie,3 Ann Pope,3 Darren Barton,3 Lazaros Andronis,4 Ilias Goranitis,4 Stuart Collins,3 Duncan McLaren,5 Joe O’Sullivan,6 Chris Parker,7 Emilio Porfiri,1 John Staffurth,8,9 Andrew Stanley,10 James Wylie,11 Sharon Beesley,12 Alison Birtle,13 Janet Brown,14 Prabir Chakraborti,15 Martin Russell16 and Lucinda Billingham3

1Department of Oncology, University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham, UK
2Cancer Research Unit, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
3Cancer Research UK Clinical Trials Unit, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK
4Health Economics Unit, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK
5Edinburgh Cancer Centre, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, UK
6Department of Oncology, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast, UK
7Department of Oncology, Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton, UK
8Institute of Cancer and Genetics, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK
9Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff, UK
10Pharmacy Department, City Hospital, Birmingham, UK
11Department of Oncology, The Christie Hospital, Manchester, UK
12Kent Oncology Centre, Maidstone Hospital, Kent, UK
13Rosemere Cancer Centre, Royal Preston Hospital, Preston, UK
14Department of Oncology, St James’ University Hospital, Leeds, UK
15Department of Oncology, Royal Derby Hospital, Derby, UK
16Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre, Glasgow, UK

*Corresponding author
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Plain English summary

TRAPEZE: effectiveness of chemotherapy with ZA, Sr-89, or both
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TRAPEZE evaluated the use of two bone-targeting therapies, strontium-89 (Sr-89) and zoledronic acid (ZA), in men receiving docetaxel chemotherapy for relapsing prostate cancer involving the skeleton. Bony disease can cause pain, fractures and other serious complications. Docetaxel has been shown to increase survival and improve quality of life (QoL) in this setting. Intravenous ZA has been shown to reduce skeletal complications in prostate cancer, but is not recommended for general use because of doubts over its cost-effectiveness. Sr-89 is a radioactive drug taken up by bone cancer deposits and is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence when chemotherapy is unsuitable.

TRAPEZE showed that adding Sr-89 to docetaxel delayed deterioration by around a month, but did not result in any improvement in overall survival. Adding ZA did not delay deterioration but did reduce subsequent serious bone complications by around one-third, with a 50% reduction in the most serious events such as fracture and spinal cord compression. QoL was well maintained. Both drugs increased treatment costs but decreased post-trial therapy costs because of delayed deterioration and, for ZA, decreased surgery and radiotherapy for bone complications.

Incremental costs per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY) for branded ZA and Sr-89 were calculated at £42,047 and £16,590, respectively. Sr-89 net acquisition was £1341 with modest gains in QoL and cost per QALY gained, a measure of the effectiveness of drug treatments. For ZA, net acquisition was £1319, but this cost was reduced to £251 by using the generic drug. The cost per QALY for the generic drug fell to £8005, making ZA both cost-effective and clinically effective as a therapy.
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