The Diagnosis and Treatment of Lung Cancer
Foreword

Lung cancer remains the UK’s commonest cause of cancer death. It is now over 50 years since Sir Richard Doll’s seminal paper linked tobacco smoking to lung cancer. Although tobacco consumption has fallen overall since then, with a resultant fall in the male incidence of lung cancer, smoking has increased in women, having the effect of increased lung cancer in females. Tobacco control remains the crucial factor in reducing future lung cancer rates.

It is clear to everyone involved in lung cancer care that the public concept of this disease is characterised by much negativity. There is too much emphasis generally on the relatively poor outcomes of treatment, there is a lack of sympathy for the patients deemed to have brought the disease on themselves through tobacco use, and there is an impression which is unwarranted, that some professionals have a nihilistic attitude about the treatment of lung cancer patients. There are few patient advocates, and the disease has a low public profile in respect of media coverage, general awareness and research funding.

However, in reviewing the research, and preparing this guideline, the Development Group were encouraged by many positive developments such as the emergence of the lung cancer specialist nurse service, the creation of Lung Cancer Multi-Disciplinary teams, and the improvement in the evidence base for treatment, especially chemotherapy. We would also wish to highlight developments in technology, such as FDG-PET scanning in disease staging and the use of the CHART regimen for the delivery of radical radiotherapy in suitable patients.

The Development Group were charged to consider “the diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer”. This is a huge topic overall. To consider every nuance of presentation and management in this guideline would have been a formidable and impossible task. We have not set out to write a textbook of lung cancer care. Rather, we have attempted to review the main outlines of lung cancer presentation, diagnosis and treatment, with particular emphasis on areas where there has been new evidence, or, where it seems to us, carefully evaluated guidance, which will improve patient care.

It has been a difficult decision for the group as to which aspects to include, which to omit and which to highlight. It has been particularly difficult too narrow down our original 94 recommendations to 10 key items, which we believe if implemented, will have the greatest impact on patient outcomes. We hope however that the research review in this document and the conclusions we have drawn from it will continue the improvements which are taking place in the care of patients with this common and important disease.

Jesme Baird,
Chair, Guideline Development Group.
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Conflict of Interests

The Guideline Development Group were asked to declare any possible conflict of interest and none that could interfere with their work on the guideline were declared. All documentation is held by the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care.

Guideline Review Panel

The Guideline Review Panel is an independent panel that oversees the development of the guideline and takes responsibility for monitoring its quality. The members of the Guideline Review Panel were as follows.

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Stakeholder Involvement

The following stakeholders registered with NICE and were invited to comment on draft versions of these guidelines:

- Abbott Laboratories Limited (BASF/Knoll)
- Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)
- Aliya Trust, The
- Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust
- Airedale General Hospital
- Amesham Health
- Amgen UK Ltd
- Anglesey Local Health Board
- Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland
- Association for Respiratory Technology & Physiology
- Association of Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care Social Workers
- Association of the British Pharmaceuticals Industry (ABPI)
- AstraZeneca UK Ltd
- Aventis Pharma
- Bard Limited
- Bath and North East Somerset PCT
- Baxter Oncology
- Bayer PLC
- Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority
- Biologics Pharma Ltd (formerly QuantaNova Limited)
- Birmingham Heartlands & Solihull NHS Trust
- Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board
- Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust
- Boston Scientific Limited
- Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Trust
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals Ltd
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- British Association for Parenteral & Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN)
- British Association of Art Therapists
- British Dietetic Association
- British Genecis Society
- British Lung Foundation
- British National Formulary (BNF)
- British Nuclear Medicine Society
- British Psychological Society, The
- British Psychosocial Oncology Society
- British Thoracic Society
- BUPA
- Cancer Research UK
- Cancer Services Co-ordinating Group
- Cancer Voices
- CancerBACUP
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal Hospital NHS Trust
- Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust
- College of Occupational Therapists
- Countess of Chester Hospitals NHS Trust
- Craven Harrogate & Rural District PCT
- Department of Health
- Eisa Limited
- Eli Lilly and Company Ltd
- Faculty of Public Health
- Gateshead Health NHS Trust
- GE Healthcare
- General Medical Council
- General Practice Airways Group Limited
- General Practice and Primary Care
- GlaxoSmithKline UK
- Guerbet Laboratories Ltd
- Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust
- Healthcare Commission
- Help Adolescents with Cancer
- Help the Hospices
- Intercollegiate Lung Cancer Group
- Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust
- Joint Committee on Palliative Medicine
- Leeds North East PCT
- Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Lifestyles
- Liverpool Reviews and Implementation Group
- Long Term Medical Conditions Alliance
- Macmillan Cancer Relief
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
- Marie Curie Cancer Care
- Medexus Pharma Ltd
- Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Unit
- Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- Merek Pharmaceuticals
- Mid Essex Hospitals NHS Trust
- Mid Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust
- National Audit Office
- National Cancer Alliance
- National Cancer Network Clinical Directors Group
- National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Clinical Studies Group
- National Council for Disabled People, Black, Minority and Ethnic Community (Equalities)
- National Council for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care Services
- National Lung Cancer Forum for Nurses
- National Patient Safety Agency
- National Public Health Service - Wales
- Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust
- NHS Modernisation Agency, The
- NHS Quality Improvement Scotland
- North Glamorgan NHS Trust – Merthyr Tydfil
- Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd
- Ortho Biotech
- Papworth Hospital NHS Trust
- Pfizer Limited
- Pierre Fabre Limited
- Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust
- Roche Products Limited
- Rotherham Primary Care Trust
- Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation
- Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust
- Royal College of Anaesthetists
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Royal College of General Practitioners Wales
- Royal College of Nursing – Lung cancer
- Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
- Royal College of Pathologists
- Royal College of Physicians of London
- Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Royal College of Radiologists
- Royal College of Surgeons of England
- Royal College of Surgeons of England / Thoracic Forum
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
- Saiford Primary Care Trust
- Sanofi-Synthelabo
- Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN)
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Society and College of Radiographers
- Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons
- South & Central Huddersfield PCTs
- Tameside and Glossop Acute Services NHS Trust
- Teenage Cancer Trust, The
- Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority
- The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust
- The Medway NHS Trust
- The National Association of Assistants in Surgical Practice
- The Royal Society of Medicine
- The Royal West Sussex Trust
- UK Pain Society
- University College London Hospital NHS Trust
- Velindre NHS Trust
- Waveney PCT
- Welsh Assembly Government (formerly National Assembly for Wales)
- Wessex Cancer Trust
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Active Supportive Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
<td>Best Supportive Care</td>
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<td>BTS</td>
<td>British Thoracic Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCOPGI</td>
<td>Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guidelines Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEA</td>
<td>Cost Effectiveness Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHART</td>
<td>Continuous Hyperfractionated Accelerated Radiotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Confidence Interval</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Computerised tomography</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWU</td>
<td>Conventional Work Up</td>
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<tr>
<td>CXR</td>
<td>Chest X-Ray</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEALE</td>
<td>Declining Exponential Approximation of Life Expectancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Diagnostic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>Extensive disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUS</td>
<td>Endobronchial ultrasound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUS-NA</td>
<td>Endoscopic ultrasound guided needle aspiration</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDG</td>
<td>F-18-deoxyglucose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNA</td>
<td>Fine needle aspiration</td>
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<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>False positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDG</td>
<td>Guideline Development Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>General Practitioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPP</td>
<td>Good Practice Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRQL</td>
<td>Health Related Quality of Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTA</td>
<td>Health Technology Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTBS</td>
<td>Health Technology Board for Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICER</td>
<td>Incremental Cost Effectiveness Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Inpatient</td>
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<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>Limited disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>Lymph node</td>
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<tr>
<td>LY</td>
<td>Life-year</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDT</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Medical Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRI</td>
<td>Magnetic Resonance Imaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVP</td>
<td>Mitomycin-vindesine-cisplatin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCC-AC</td>
<td>National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND-YAG</td>
<td>Neodymium-Yttrium Aluminum Garnet</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICE</td>
<td>National Institute for Clinical Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNH</td>
<td>Number needed to harm</td>
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<td>NNT</td>
<td>Number needed to treat</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPV</td>
<td>Negative predictive value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSCLC</td>
<td>Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>Outpatient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Odds ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI</td>
<td>Prophylactic Cranial Irradiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDT</td>
<td>Photodynamic therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PET</td>
<td>Positron Emission Tomography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPV</td>
<td>Positive predictive value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Performance status</td>
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<tr>
<td>QALY</td>
<td>Quality adjusted life year</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomised controlled trial</td>
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<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>Radiotherapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCLC</td>
<td>Small Cell Lung Cancer</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIGN</td>
<td>Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLN</td>
<td>Subcarinal lymph Nodes</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPECT</td>
<td>Single Photon Emission Computerised Tomography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPN</td>
<td>Solitary Pulmonary Nodules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SROC</td>
<td>Summary Receiver Operating Characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVCO</td>
<td>Superior vena cava obstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTNA</td>
<td>Transthoracic needle aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>Ultrasound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VATS</td>
<td>Video assisted thoracoscopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary of Terms

Amended from a glossary produced by the Patient Involvement Unit, NICE.

Absolute risk
Measures the probability of an event or outcome occurring (e.g. an adverse reaction to the drug being tested) in the group of people under study. Studies that compare two or more groups of patients may report results in terms of the Absolute Risk Reduction.

Absolute Risk Reduction (ARR)
The ARR is the difference in the risk of an event occurring between two groups of patients in a study – for example if 6% of patients die after receiving a new experimental drug and 10% of patients die after having the old drug treatment then the ARR is 10% - 6% = 4%. Thus by using the new drug instead of the old drug 4% of patients can be prevented from dying. Here the ARR measures the risk reduction associated with a new treatment. See also Absolute risk.

Adjuvant chemotherapy
The use of chemotherapy after initial treatment by surgery and/or radiotherapy.

Adjuvant radiotherapy
The use of radiotherapy after treatment by surgery.

Benign
Non-cancerous. Does not metastasise and treatment or removal is curative.

Bias
Influences on a study that can lead to invalid conclusions about a treatment or intervention. Bias in research can make a treatment look better or worse than it really is. Bias can even make it look as if the treatment works when it actually doesn't. Bias can occur by chance or as a result of systematic errors in the design and execution of a study. Bias can occur at different stages in the research process, e.g. in the collection, analysis, interpretation, publication or review of research data.

Blinding or masking
The practice of keeping the investigators or subjects of a study ignorant of the group to which a subject has been assigned. For example, a clinical trial in which the participating patients or their doctors are unaware of whether they (the patients) are taking the experimental drug or a placebo (dummy treatment). The purpose of ‘blinding’ or ‘masking’ is to protect against bias.

Case-control study
A study that starts with the identification of a group of individuals sharing the same characteristics (e.g. people with a particular disease) and a suitable comparison (control) group (e.g. people without the disease). All subjects are then assessed with respect to things that happened to them in the past, e.g. things that might be related to getting the disease under investigation. Such studies are also called retrospective as they look back in time from the outcome to the possible causes.

Case report (or case study)
Detailed report on one patient (or case), usually covering the course of that person's disease and their response to treatment.

Case series
Description of several cases of a given disease, usually covering the course of the disease and the response to treatment. There is no comparison (control) group of patients.

Cohort study
An observational study that takes a group (cohort) of patients and follows their progress over time in order to measure outcomes such as disease or mortality rates and make comparisons according to the treatments or interventions that patients received. Thus within the study group, subgroups of patients are identified (from information collected about patients) and these groups are compared with respect to outcome, e.g. comparing mortality between one group that received a specific treatment and one group which did not (or between two groups that received different levels of treatment). Cohorts can be assembled in the present and followed into the future (a ‘concurrent’ or ‘prospective’ cohort study) or identified from past records and followed forward from that time up to the present (a ‘historical’ or ‘retrospective’ cohort study). Because patients are not randomly allocated to subgroups, these subgroups may be quite different in their characteristics and some adjustment must be made when analysing the results to ensure that the comparison between groups is as fair as possible.

Combined modality
Use of different treatments in combination (for example surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy used together).

Co-morbidity
Co-existence of a disease or diseases in the people being studied in addition to the health problem that is the subject of the study.

Confidence interval
A way of expressing certainty about the findings from a study or group of studies, using statistical techniques. A confidence interval describes a range of possible effects (of a treatment or intervention) that are consistent with the results of a study or group of studies. A wide confidence interval indicates a lack of certainty or precision about the true size of the clinical effect and is seen in studies with too few patients. Where confidence intervals are narrow they indicate more precise estimates of effects and a larger sample of patients studied. It is usual to interpret a ‘95%’ confidence interval as the range of effects within which we are 95% confident that the true effect lies.

Confounder or confounding factor
Something that influences a study and can contribute to misleading findings if it is not understood or appropriately dealt with. For example, if a group of people exercising regularly and a group of people who do not exercise have an important age difference then any difference found in outcomes about heart disease could well be due to one group being older than the other rather than due to the exercising. Age is the confounding factor here and the effect of exercising on heart disease cannot be assessed without adjusting for age differences in some way.

Control group
A group of patients recruited into a study that receives no treatment, a treatment of known effect, or a placebo (dummy treatment) - in order to provide a comparison for a group receiving an experimental treatment, such as a new drug.
Evidence based clinical practice  
Evidence based clinical practice involves making decisions about the care of individual patients based on the best research evidence available rather than basing decisions on personal opinions or common practice (which may not always be evidence based). Evidence based clinical practice therefore involves integrating individual clinical expertise and patient preferences with the best available evidence from research.

Evidence table  
A table summarising the results of a collection of studies which, taken together, represent the evidence supporting a particular recommendation or series of recommendations in a guideline.

Exclusion criteria  
See Selection criteria.

Focus group  
A qualitative research technique. It is a method of group interview or discussion of between 6–12 people focused around a particular issue or topic. The method explicitly includes and uses the group interaction to generate data.

Gold standard  
A method, procedure or measurement that is widely accepted as being the best available.

Good Performance Status  
Performance Status 0/1 WHO/Zubrod scale or 80-100 Karnofsky scale (see Appendix 2, Figure 4)

Gray (Gy)  
Unit of absorbed radiation dose

Health economics  
The study of the allocation of scarce resources among alternative health care treatments. Health economists are concerned with both increasing the average level of health in the population and improving the distribution of health.

Heterogeneity  
Or lack of homogeneity. The term is used in meta-analyses and systematic reviews when the results or estimates of effects of treatment from separate studies seem to be very different – in terms of the size of treatment effects or even to the extent that some indicate beneficial and others suggest adverse treatment effects. Such results may occur as a result of differences between studies in terms of the patient populations, outcome measures, definition of variables or duration of follow-up.

Homogeneity  
This means that the results of studies included in a systematic review or meta analysis are similar and there is no evidence of heterogeneity. Results are usually regarded as homogeneous when differences between studies could reasonably be expected to occur by chance.

Inclusion criteria  
See Selection criteria.

In situ  
A cancer that is in the natural place, is non-invasive without invading neighbouring tissue

Intervention  
Healthcare action intended to benefit the patient, e.g. drug treatment, surgical procedure, psychological therapy, etc.

Life year  
A measure of health outcome which shows the number of years of remaining life expectancy

Longitudinal study  
A study of the same group of people at more than one point in time. (This type of study contrasts with a cross sectional study which observes a defined set of people at a single point in time)
Lymph
Almost colourless fluid that bathes body tissues and is carried by lymphatic vessels. Contains cells that help fight infection and disease.

Lymph nodes or glands
Small bean-shaped organs located along the lymphatic system. Nodes filter bacteria or cancer cells that might travel through the lymphatic system.

Malignant
Cancerous. Malignant tumours can invade and destroy surrounding tissue and have the capacity to spread.

Meta analysis
Results from a collection of independent studies (investigating the same treatment) are pooled, using statistical techniques to synthesise their findings into a single estimate of a treatment effect. Where studies are not compatible e.g. because of differences in the study populations or in the outcomes measured, it may be inappropriate or even misleading to statistically pool results in this way. See also Systematic review & Heterogeneity.

Metastasis
Spread of cancer from one part of the body to another.

Negative lymph nodes
Lymph nodes showing no signs of cancer.

Non-small cell lung cancer
NSCLC
A cancer type that accounts for the vast majority of lung cancers.

Number Needed to Treat (NNT)
This measures the impact of a treatment or intervention. It states how many patients need to be treated with the treatment in question in order to prevent one bad outcome. The closer the NNT is to 1, the better the treatment is. Analogous to the NNT is the Number Needed to Harm (NNH), which is the number of patients that would need to receive a treatment to cause one additional adverse event e.g. if the NNH=4, then 4 patients would have to be treated to prevent one bad outcome. The closer the NNT is to 1, the better the treatment is. Analogous to the NNT is the Number Needed to Harm (NNH), which is the number of patients that would need to receive a treatment to cause one additional adverse event e.g. if the NNH=4, then 4 patients would have to be treated to prevent one bad outcome.

Observational study
In research about diseases or treatments, this refers to a study in which nature is allowed to take its course. Changes or differences in one characteristic (e.g. whether or not people received a specific treatment or intervention) are studied in relation to changes or differences in other(s) (e.g. whether or not they died), without the intervention of the investigator. There is a greater risk of selection bias than in experimental studies.

Odds ratio
Odds are a way of representing probability, especially familiar for betting. In recent years odds ratios have become widely used in reports of clinical studies. They provide an estimate (usually with a confidence interval) for the effect of a treatment. Odds are used to convey the idea of ‘risk’ and an odds ratio of 1 between two treatment groups would imply that the risks of an adverse outcome were the same in each group. For rare events the odds ratio and the relative risk (which uses actual risks and not odds) will be very similar.

Performance status
A measure of how well a patient is able to perform ordinary tasks and carry out daily activities (PS WHO score of 0=asymptomatic, 4=bedridden, or a Karnofsky score of 0=dead, 100=asymptomatic.

Pilot study
A small scale ‘test’ of the research instrument. For example, testing out (piloting) a new questionnaire with people who are similar to the population of the study, in order to highlight any problems or areas of concern, which can then be addressed before the full scale study begins.

Placebo
Placebos are fake or inactive treatments received by participants allocated to the control group in a clinical trial which are indistinguishable from the active treatments being given in the experimental group. They are used so that participants are ignorant of their treatment allocation in order to be able to quantify the effect of the experimental treatment over and above any placebo effect due to receiving care or attention.

Placebo effect
A beneficial (or adverse) effect produced by a placebo and not due to any property of the placebo itself.

Positive lymph nodes
Lymph nodes that contain cancer cells.

Power
See Statistical power.

Primary care
Healthcare delivered to patients outside hospitals. Primary care covers a range of services provided by GPs, nurses and other health care professionals, dentists, pharmacists and opticians.

Primary tumour
Original site of the cancer.

Prognostic factor
Patient or disease characteristics, e.g. age or co-morbidity, which influence the course of the disease under study. In a randomised trial to compare two treatments, chance imbalances in variables (prognostic factors) that influence patient outcome are possible, especially if the size of the study is fairly small. In terms of analysis these prognostic factors become confounding factors.

Prospective study
A study in which people are entered into the research and then followed up over a period of time with future events recorded as they happen. This contrasts with studies that are retrospective

P value
If a study is done to compare two treatments then the P value is the probability of obtaining the results of that study, or something more extreme, if there really was no difference between treatments. (The assumption that there really is no difference between treatments is called the ‘null hypothesis’.) Suppose the P value was P=0.03. What this means is that if there really was no difference between treatments then there would only be a 3% chance of getting the kind of results obtained. Since this chance seems quite low we should question the validity of the assumption that there really is no difference between treatments. We would conclude that there probably is a difference between treatments. By convention, where the value of P is below 0.05 (i.e. less than 5%) the result is seen as statistically significant. Where the value of P is 0.001 or less, the result is seen as highly significant. P values just tell us whether an effect can be regarded as statistically significant or not. In no way do they relate to how big the effect might be, for which we need the confidence interval.
Qualitative research

Qualitative research is used to explore and understand people’s beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions. It generates non-numerical data, e.g. a patient’s description of their pain rather than a measure of pain. In healthcare, qualitative techniques have been commonly used in research documenting the experience of chronic illness and in studies about the functioning of organisations. Qualitative research techniques such as focus groups and in-depth interviews have been used in one-off projects commissioned by guideline development groups to find out more about the views and experiences of patients and carers.

Quality adjusted life years (QALYS)

A measure of health outcome. QALYS are calculated by estimating the number of years of life gained from a treatment and weighting each year with a quality of life score between zero and one.

Quantitative research

Research that generates numerical data or data that can be converted into numbers, for example clinical trials or the national Census which counts people and households.

Random allocation or Randomisation

A method that uses the play of chance to assign participants to comparison groups in a research study, for example, by using a random numbers table or a computer-generated random sequence. Random allocation implies that each individual (or each unit in the case of cluster randomisation) being entered into a study has the same chance of receiving each of the possible interventions.

Randomised controlled trial (RCT)

A study to test a specific drug or other treatment in which people are randomly assigned to two (or more) groups: one (the experimental group) receiving the treatment that is being tested, and the other (the comparison or control group) receiving an alternative treatment, a placebo (dummy treatment) or no treatment. The two groups are followed up to compare differences in outcomes to see how effective the experimental treatment was. (Through randomisation, the groups should be similar in all aspects apart from the treatment they receive during the study.)

Relative risk

A summary measure which represents the ratio of the risk of a given event or outcome (e.g. an adverse reaction to the drug being tested) in one group of subjects compared to another group. When the ‘risk’ of the event is the same in the two groups the relative risk is 1. In a study comparing two treatments, a relative risk of 2 would indicate that patients receiving one of the treatments had twice the risk of an undesirable outcome than those receiving the other treatment. Relative risk is sometimes used as a synonym for risk ratio.

Retrospective study

A retrospective study deals with the present/past and does not involve studying future events. This contrasts with studies that are prospective.

Risk ratio

Ratio of the risk of an undesirable event or outcome occurring in a group of patients receiving experimental treatment compared with a comparison (control) group. The term relative risk is sometimes used as a synonym of risk ratio.

Sample

A part of the study’s target population from which the subjects of the study will be recruited. If subjects are drawn in an unbiased way from a particular population, the results can be generalised from the sample to the population as a whole.

SCLC

Small Cell Lung Cancer

Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN)

SIGN was established in 1993 to sponsor and support the development of evidence-based clinical guidelines for the NHS in Scotland.

Secondary care

Care provided in hospitals.

Selection criteria

Explicit standards used by guideline development groups to decide which studies should be included and excluded from consideration as potential sources of evidence.

Sensitivity

In diagnostic testing, it refers to the chance of having a positive test result given that you have the disease. 100% sensitivity means that all those with the disease will test positive, but this is not the same the other way around. A patient could have a positive test result but not have the disease – this is called a ‘false positive’. The sensitivity of a test is also related to its ‘negative predictive value’ (true negatives) – a test with a sensitivity of 100% means that all those who get a negative test result do not have the disease. To fully judge the accuracy of a test, its Specificity must also be considered.

Specificity

In diagnostic testing, it refers to the chance of having a negative test result given that you do not have the disease. 100% specificity means that all those without the disease will test negative, but this is not the same the other way around. A patient could have a negative test result yet still have the disease – this is called a ‘false negative’. The specificity of a test is also related to its ‘positive predictive value’ (true positives) – a test with a specificity of 100% means that all those who get a positive test result definitely have the disease. To fully judge the accuracy of a test, its Sensitivity must also be considered.

Staging

Process of describing to what degree cancer has spread from its original site to another part of the body. Staging involves clinical, surgical and pathology assessments.

Statistical power

The ability of a study to demonstrate an association or causal relationship between two variables, given that an association exists. For example, 80% power in a clinical trial means that the study has a 80% chance of ending up with a P value of less than 5% in a statistical test (i.e. a statistically significant treatment effect) if there really was an important difference (e.g. 10% versus 5% mortality) between treatments. If the statistical power of a study is low, the study results will be questionable (the study might have been too small to detect any differences). By convention, 80% is an acceptable level of power. See also P value

Summary Receiver Operating Characteristic curve (sROC)

A statistical method to combine the results of multiple studies assessing the diagnostic performance of a test. It takes into account the relationship between sensitivity and specificity among the individual studies by plotting the true positive rate (sensitivity) against the false positive rate (1-specificity).

Systematic review

A review, in which evidence from scientific studies has been identified, appraised and synthesised in a methodical way according to predetermined criteria. May or may not include a meta-analysis.

TNM classification

TNM classification provides a system for staging the extent of cancer. T refers to the size of the primary tumour. N refers to the involvement of the lymph nodes. M refers to the presence of metastases or distant spread of the disease.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Epidemiology

In 2002, lung cancer accounted for nearly 29,000 deaths in England and Wales. It is the most common cause of cancer death for men, who account for 60% of lung cancer cases. In women it is the second most common cause of cancer death after breast cancer. Past trends of lung cancer incidence reflect the changes in smoking habits over the last century. The age-standardised incidence rates show a long-term decrease in cases among males but an increase in cases among women. Under the age of 40 lung cancer is rare, but incidence rises sharply with age and the most common age group at diagnosis is 70-74.

Survival rates for lung cancer are very poor. In England, for patients diagnosed between 1993 and 1995 and followed up to 2000, 21.4% of men and 21.8% of women with lung cancer were alive one year after diagnosis and only 5.5% of both men and women were alive after five years. For Wales, the latest figures on survival, for people diagnosed between 1994 and 1998, showed 1-year relative survival of 20.5% for both males and females and five year relative survival figures of 6% for both males and females. These figures are around 5 percentage points lower than the European average and 7-10 percentage points lower than the USA. Five year survival rates vary between different English health authorities, ranging from 2.2% to 8.9%, for patients diagnosed with lung cancer between 1993 and 1995. Although 1-year survival has improved by about five percentage points since the early 1970s, there has been little improvement in 5-year survival.

Lung cancers are classified into two main categories: small-cell lung cancers (SCLC), which account for approximately 20% of cases, and non-small cell lung cancers (NSCLC), which account for the other 80%. Non-small cell lung cancer includes squamous cell (35%), adenocarcinomas (27%) and large cell (10%) carcinomas. In practice however, not all patients receive histological confirmation of the cell type of their disease. Figures recorded by NYCRIS (North Yorkshire Cancer Registry and Information Service), from a registry-based population study conducted during 1986-1994, showed that 55% were confirmed as NSCLC, 11% as SCLC and 34% had no histological confirmation of cell type.

1.1.2 Risk Factors

Smoking is by far the greatest cause of lung cancer, accounting for an estimated 85 to 90% of cases, but the precise relationship with smoking is probably complex. The age-adjusted relative risk of developing lung cancer, for people that smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day, is 20 times that compared with lifelong non-smokers (or a 2000% increased risk), and many studies have reported that women who smoke are more likely to develop lung cancer than male smokers. Stopping smoking earlier is associated with greater benefit, stopping before middle age means that an individual can avoid almost 90% of the risk, although the risk never drops to the level it was prior to smoking. A number of studies, presented in a recent review, have shown the danger of environmental tobacco smoke or passive smoking and have examined its links with lung cancer. It has been estimated that in the UK passive smoking could account for several hundred cases of lung cancer each year. A meta-analysis of 37 studies of non-smokers who lived with smokers showed an increased risk of lung cancer of 24% (85% CI 13-36%).
A number of other occupational and environmental factors are risk factors for lung cancer. Asbestos is the greatest occupational risk factor. Other known occupational carcinogens include arsenic, beryllium, bis (chloromethyl) ether, cadmium, chromium, nickel, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, vinyl chloride and radon. Radon is also an environmental carcinogen as it is the decay product of naturally occurring uranium in the earth and can accumulate in buildings. Radon is estimated to account for around 2000 lung cancer deaths per year in the UK, or about 6% of the total. Other studies have identified air pollution, poor nutrition, previous and current smoking, lung disease and genetic predisposition as risk factors for lung cancer.

1.2 What is a guideline?
Guidelines are recommendations for the care of individuals in specific clinical conditions or circumstances – from prevention and self-care through primary and secondary care to more specialised services. Clinical guidelines are based on the best available evidence, and are produced to help health care professionals and patients make informed choices about appropriate health care. While guidelines assist the practice of healthcare professionals, they do not replace their knowledge and skills.

Clinical guidelines for the NHS in England and Wales are produced as a response to a request from the Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly Government. They select topics for guideline development and before deciding whether to refer a particular topic to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) they consult with the relevant patient body, professional organisations and companies. Once a topic is referred, NICE then commissions one of seven bodies, professional organisations and companies to develop a guideline. The Collaborating Centres are independent of government and comprise partnerships between a variety of academic institutions, health profession bodies and patient groups.

1.3 Remit of the Guideline
The following remit was received from the Department of Health and National Assembly for Wales in July 2001 as part of NICE’s 6th wave programme of work:

“To prepare clinical guidelines for the NHS in England and Wales for the diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. This is to supplement the existing service guidance published by the Department of Health in 1998 and this commission replaces the earlier commission to update that guidance”.


It was expected that this previous work should be “updated to reflect recent evidence”, in the form of a clinical guideline.

The recommendations in this guideline were arrived at following careful consideration of the available evidence.

1.4 What the guideline covers
This guideline:

> is relevant to multidisciplinary teams involved in the diagnosis and care of patients with suspected or diagnosed lung cancer. These teams may include, for example, general physicians and nurses, chest physicians, palliative care physicians, clinical and medical oncologists, thoracic surgeons, geriatricians, cellular pathologists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, pharmacists and clinical psychologists.

> is relevant to multidisciplinary teams involved in the diagnosis and care of patients with suspected or diagnosed lung cancer. These teams may include, for example, general physicians and nurses, chest physicians, palliative care physicians, clinical and medical oncologists, thoracic surgeons, geriatricians, cellular pathologists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, pharmacists and clinical psychologists.

> is relevant in palliative interventions, and service organisation.

> is relevant to multidisciplinary teams involved in the diagnosis and care of patients with suspected or diagnosed lung cancer. These teams may include, for example, general physicians and nurses, chest physicians, palliative care physicians, clinical and medical oncologists, thoracic surgeons, geriatricians, cellular pathologists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, pharmacists and clinical psychologists.

> is relevant to multidisciplinary teams involved in the diagnosis and care of patients with suspected or diagnosed lung cancer. These teams may include, for example, general physicians and nurses, chest physicians, palliative care physicians, clinical and medical oncologists, thoracic surgeons, geriatricians, cellular pathologists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, pharmacists and clinical psychologists.

> is relevant to multidisciplinary teams involved in the diagnosis and care of patients with suspected or diagnosed lung cancer. These teams may include, for example, general physicians and nurses, chest physicians, palliative care physicians, clinical and medical oncologists, thoracic surgeons, geriatricians, cellular pathologists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, pharmacists and clinical psychologists.

1.6 Collaboration with the Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network
In 2002, NICE received a referral from the Department of Health and Welsh Assembly Government to produce a guideline on the diagnosis and management of lung cancer. This occurred at approximately the same time that the Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (SIGN) was preparing a similar guideline on lung cancer. In order to avoid duplication of work, NICE and SIGN decided to share the workload relating to searching and reviewing the literature. NICE commissioned the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care to develop this guideline and the Centre then took on the responsibility of working with SIGN.

Although the NCC-AC and SIGN shared certain aspects of the search, retrieval and review of the literature, they had autonomy in developing their own clinical questions and final recommendations. The areas of literature reviewed by the NCC-AC and SIGN are outlined in Table 1.

1.7 Who developed the guideline?
A multidisciplinary Guideline Development Group (GDG) comprising professional group members and consumer representatives of the main stakeholders developed this guideline (see Guideline Development Group Membership and acknowledgements).
1.8.1 The Key Recommendations for Implementation

The following recommendations have been selected from the full list (see 1.8.2) as priorities for implementation:

Access to services

1. All patients diagnosed with lung cancer should be offered information, both verbal and written, on all aspects of their diagnosis, treatment and care. This information should be tailored to the individual requirements of the patient, and audio and videotaped formats should also be considered.

2. Urgent referral for a chest X-ray should be offered when a patient presents with:
   - haemoptysis, or
   - any of the following unexplained or persistent (that is, lasting more than 3 weeks) symptoms or signs:
     - cough
     - chest/shoulder pain
     - dyspnoea
     - weight loss
     - chest signs
     - hoarseness
     - finger clubbing
     - features suggestive of metastasis from a lung cancer (for example in brain, bone, liver or skin)
     - cervical/supraclavicular lymphadenopathy

3. If a chest X-ray or chest computerized tomography (CT) scan suggests lung cancer (including pleural effusion and slowly resolving consolidation), patients should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer multidisciplinary team (MDT), usually a chest physician.

Staging

4. Every cancer network should have a system of rapid access to 18F-deoxyglucose positron emission tomography (FDG-PET) scanning for eligible patients.

Radical radiotherapy alone for treatment of non-small-cell lung cancer

5. Patients with stages I and II non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) who are medically inoperable but suitable for radical radiotherapy should be offered the continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy (CHART) regimen.

Chemotherapy for non-small-cell lung cancer

6. Chemotherapy should be offered to patients with stages III and IV NSCLC and good performance status (WHO 0, 1 or a Karnofsky score of 80–100) to improve survival, disease control and quality of life.

1.8.2 The Clinical Practice Recommendations

Recommendations are graded A, B, C, D or D(GPP) according to the level of evidence on effectiveness that the recommendation is based on. Studies of diagnostic accuracy are graded A(DS), B(DS), C(DS) or D(DS). Some recommendations are based on both diagnostic and effectiveness evidence and therefore receive two grades to reflect this. Please see Chapter Two for grading information.

1.8.2.1 Access to Services

All patients diagnosed with lung cancer should be offered information, both verbal and written, on all aspects of their diagnosis, treatment and care. This information should be tailored to the individual requirements of the patient, and audio and videotaped formats should also be considered.

Treatment options and plans should be discussed with the patient and decisions on treatment and care should be made jointly with the patient. Treatment plans must be tailored around the patient’s needs and wishes to be involved, and his or her capacity to make decisions.

The public needs to be better informed of the symptoms and signs that are characteristic of lung cancer, through co-ordinated campaigning to raise awareness.

Urgent referral for a chest X-ray should be offered when a patient presents with:

- haemoptysis, or
- any of the following unexplained or persistent (that is, lasting more than 3 weeks) symptoms or signs:
  - cough
  - chest/shoulder pain
  - dyspnoea
  - weight loss
  - chest signs
  - hoarseness
  - finger clubbing
  - features suggestive of metastasis from a lung cancer (for example in brain, bone, liver or skin)
  - cervical/supraclavicular lymphadenopathy
If a chest X-ray or chest computed tomography (CT) scan suggests lung cancer (including pleural effusion and slowly resolving consolidation), patients should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer multidisciplinary team (MDT), usually a chest physician. (D)

If the chest X-ray is normal but there is a high suspicion of lung cancer, patients should be offered urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer MDT, usually the chest physician. (D)

Patients should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer MDT, usually the chest physician, while awaiting the result of a chest X-ray, if any of the following are present (D):

> persistent haemoptysis in smokers/ex-smokers older than 40 years

> signs of superior vena caval obstruction (swelling of the face/neck with fixed elevation of jugular venous pressure)

> stridor

Emergency referral should be considered for patients with superior vena cava obstruction or stridor.

### 1.8.2.2 Diagnosis

Where a chest X-ray has been requested in primary or secondary care and is incidentally suggestive of lung cancer, a second copy of the radiologist’s report should be sent to a designated member of the lung cancer MDT, usually the chest physician. The MDT should have a mechanism in place to follow up these reports to enable the patient’s GP to have a management plan in place. (D(GPP))

Patients with known or suspected lung cancer should be offered a contrast-enhanced chest CT scan to further the diagnosis and stage the disease. The scan should also include the liver and adrenals. (D(GPP))

Chest CT should be performed before:

> an intended fibreoptic bronchoscopy [A; C(DS)]

> any other biopsy procedure. (D(GPP))

Bronchoscopy should be performed on patients with central lesions who are able and willing to undergo the procedure. (B[DS])

Sputum cytology is rarely indicated and should be reserved for the investigation of patients who have centrally placed nodules or masses and are unable to tolerate, or unwilling to undergo, bronchoscopy or other invasive tests. (B[DS])

Percutaneous transthoracic needle biopsy is recommended for diagnosis of lung cancer in patients with peripheral lesions. (B[DS])

Surgical biopsy should be performed for diagnosis where other less invasive methods of biopsy have not been successful or are not possible. (B[DS])

Where there is evidence of distant metastases, biopsies should be taken from the metastatic site if this can be achieved more easily than from the primary site. (D(GPPI))

An 18F-deoxyglucose positron emission tomography (FDG-PET) scan should be performed to investigate solitary pulmonary nodules in cases where a biopsy is not possible or has failed, depending on nodule size, position and CT characterisation. (C, B[DS])

### 1.8.2.3 Staging

#### Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

In the assessment of mediastinal and chest wall invasion:

> CT alone may not be reliable (B[DS])

> other techniques such as ultrasound should be considered where there is doubt (D(GPPI))

> surgical assessment may be necessary if there are no contraindications to resection. (D(GPPI))

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) should not routinely be performed to assess the stage of the primary tumour (I–stage) in NSCLC. (C[DS])

MRI should be performed, where necessary to assess the extent of disease, for patients with superior sulcus tumours. (B[DS])

### 1.8.2.4 Surgery with curative intent for patients with NSCLC

Surgical resection is recommended for patients with stage I or II NSCLC who have no medical contraindications and adequate lung function. (D)

For patients with stage I or II NSCLC who can tolerate lobar resection, lobectomy is the procedure of choice. (C)

Pending further research, patients with stage I or II NSCLC who would not tolerate lobectomy because of comorbid disease or pulmonary compromise should be considered for limited resection or radical radiotherapy. (D)

For all patients with stage I or II NSCLC undergoing surgical resection – usually a lobectomy or a pneumonectomy – clear surgical margins should be the aim. (D(GPPI))

Sleeve lobectomy offers an acceptable alternative to pneumonectomy for patients with stage I or II NSCLC who have an anatomically appropriate (central) tumour. This has the advantage of conserving functioning lung. (C)

For patients with T3 NSCLC with chest wall involvement who are undergoing surgery, completing resection of the tumour should be the aim by either extrapleural or en bloc chest wall resection. (C)

All patients undergoing surgical resection for lung cancer should have systematic lymph node sampling to provide accurate pathological staging. (D[GPPI])

In patients with stage IIIa (N2) NSCLC detected through preoperative staging, surgery alone is associated with a relatively poor prognosis. Therefore, these patients should be evaluated by the lung cancer MDT. (D[GPPI])
1.8.2.5 Radical radiotherapy alone for treatment of NSCLC
Radical radiotherapy is indicated for patients with stage I, II or III NSCLC who have good performance status (WHO 0, 1) and whose disease can be encompassed in a radiotherapy treatment volume without undue risk of normal tissue damage. [D(GPP)]
All patients should undergo pulmonary function tests (including lung volumes and transfer factor) before having radical radiotherapy for NSCLC. [D(GPP)]
Patients who have poor lung function but are otherwise suitable for radical radiotherapy should still be offered radiotherapy, provided the volume of irradiated lung is small. [D(GPP)]
Patients with stage I or II NSCLC who are medically inoperable but suitable for radical radiotherapy should be offered the CHART regimen. [A]
Patients with stages IIIA or IIIB NSCLC who are eligible for radical radiotherapy and who cannot tolerate or do not wish to have chemotherapy should be offered the CHART regimen. [A]
If CHART is not available, conventionally fractionated radiotherapy to a dose of 64–66 Gy in 32–33 fractions over 6.5 weeks or 55 Gy in 20 fractions over 4 weeks should be offered. [D(GPP)]

1.8.2.6 Chemotherapy for NSCLC
Chemotherapy is offered to patients with stage III or IV NSCLC and good performance status (WHO 0, 1 or a Karnofsky score of 80–100), to improve survival, disease control and quality of life. [A]
Chemotherapy for advanced NSCLC should be a combination of a single third-generation drug (docetaxel, gemcitabine, paclitaxel or vinorelbine) plus a platinum drug. Either carboplatin or cisplatin may be administered, taking account of their toxicities, efficacy and convenience. [D(GPP)]
Patients who are unable to tolerate a platinum combination may be offered single-agent chemotherapy with a third-generation drug. [A]
Docetaxel monotherapy should be considered if second-line treatment is appropriate for patients with locally advanced or metastatic NSCLC in whom relapse has occurred after previous chemotherapy. [A]
The development of this section included a review of the following technology appraisal: ‘Docetaxel, paclitaxel, gemcitabine and vinorelbine for non-small-cell lung cancer. NICE Technology Appraisal No. 26 (2001)’. The appraisal is therefore now obsolete and has been replaced by the guideline.

1.8.2.7 Combination treatment for NSCLC
Patients with stage I, II or IIIA NSCLC who are suitable for resection should not be offered preoperative chemotherapy unless it is part of a clinical trial. [B]
Preoperative radiotherapy is not recommended for patients with NSCLC who are able to have surgery. [A]
Postoperative radiotherapy is not recommended for patients with NSCLC after complete resection. [A]
Postoperative radiotherapy should be considered after incomplete resection of the primary tumour for patients with NSCLC, with the aim of improving local control. [D]
Adjuvant chemotherapy should be offered to NSCLC patients who have had a complete resection, with discussion of the risks and benefits. [A]
Patients who are pathologically staged as II and III NSCLC following resection should not receive postoperative chemoradiotherapy unless it is within a clinical trial. [B]
Patients with stage III NSCLC who are not suitable for surgery but are eligible for radical radiotherapy should be offered sequential chemoradiotherapy. [A]

1.8.2.8 Treatment of Small Cell Lung Cancer
Patients with SCLC should be offered an assessment that includes evaluation of the major prognostic factors: performance status, serum lactate dehydrogenase, liver function tests, serum sodium, and stage. [D]
All patients with SCLC should be offered:
> platinum-based chemotherapy [A]
> multidrug regimens, because they are more effective and have a lower toxicity than single-agent regimens. [A]
Four to six cycles of chemotherapy should be offered to patients whose disease responds. Maintenance treatment is not recommended. [A]
Patients with limited-stage SCLC should be offered thoracic irradiation concurrently with the first or second cycle of chemotherapy or following completion of chemotherapy if there has been at least a good partial response within the thorax. For patients with extensive disease, thoracic irradiation should be considered following chemotherapy if there has been a complete response at distant sites and at least a good partial response within the thorax. [A]
Patients undergoing consolidation thoracic irradiation should receive a dose in the range of 40 Gy in 15 fractions over 3 weeks to 50 Gy in 25 fractions over 5 weeks. [D(GPP)]
Patients with limited disease and complete or good partial response after primary treatment should be offered prophylactic cranial irradiation. [A]
Second-line chemotherapy should be offered to patients at relapse only if their disease responded to first-line chemotherapy. The benefits are less than those of first-line chemotherapy. [D(GPP)]

1.8.2.9 Palliative interventions and supportive and palliative care
This section focuses on palliative interventions and supportive and palliative care for patients with lung cancer and therefore only evidence specific to lung cancer was reviewed. An absence of evidence does not imply that nothing can be done to help, and supportive and palliative care multidisciplinary teams—particularly specialist palliative care teams—have an important role in symptom control.

Supportive and palliative care of the patient should be provided by general and specialist palliative care providers in accordance with the NICE guidance ‘Improving supportive and palliative care for adults with cancer’. [D(GPP)]
Patients who may benefit from specialist palliative care services should be identified and referred without delay. [D(GPP)]
External beam radiotherapy should be considered for the relief of breathlessness, cough, haemoptysis or chest pain. [A]
Opioids, such as codeine or morphine, should be considered to reduce cough. [A]
Debulking bronchoscopic procedures should be considered for the relief of distressing large-airway obstruction or bleeding due to an endobronchial tumour within a large airway. [D]
Patients with endobronchial symptoms that are not palliated by other means may be considered for endobronchial therapy. [D]
Patients with extrinsic compression may be considered for treatment with stents. [D]
Non-drug interventions based on psychosocial support, breathing control and coping strategies should be considered for patients with breathlessness. [A]
Non-drug interventions for breathlessness should be delivered by a multidisciplinary group, co-ordinated by a professional with an interest in breathlessness.
and expertise in the techniques (for example, a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist). Although this support may be provided in a breathlessness clinic, patients should have access to it in all care settings. [D(GPP)]

Patients with troublesome hoarseness due to recurrent laryngeal nerve palsy should be referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist for advice. [D(GPP)]

Patients who present with superior vena cava obstruction should be offered chemotherapy and radiotherapy according to the stage of disease and performance status. [A]

Stent insertion should be considered for the immediate relief of severe symptoms of superior vena cava obstruction or following failure of earlier treatment. [B]

Corticosteroids and radiotherapy should be considered for symptomatic treatment of cerebral metastases in lung cancer. [D]

Other symptoms, including weight loss, loss of appetite, depression and difficulty swallowing, should be managed by multidisciplinary groups that include supportive and palliative care professionals. [D(GPP)]

Pleural aspiration or drainage should be performed in an attempt to relieve the symptoms of a pleural effusion. [B]

Patients who benefit symptomatically from aspiration or drainage of fluid should be offered talc pleurodesis for longer-term benefit. [B]

For patients with bone metastasis requiring palliation and for whom standard analgesic treatments are inadequate, single-fraction radiotherapy should be administered. [B]

Spinal cord compression is a medical emergency and immediate treatment (within 24 hours), with corticosteroids, radiotherapy and surgery where appropriate, is recommended. [D]

Patients with spinal cord compression should have an early referral to an oncology physiotherapist and an occupational therapist for assessment, treatment and rehabilitation. [D(GPP)]

1.8.2.10 Service organisation

All patients with a likely diagnosis of lung cancer should be referred to a member of a lung cancer MDT (usually a chest physician). [D]

The care of all patients with a working diagnosis of lung cancer should be discussed at a lung cancer MDT meeting. [D]

Early diagnosis clinics should be provided where possible for the investigation of patients with suspected lung cancer, because they are associated with faster diagnosis and less patient anxiety. [A]

All cancer units/centres should have one or more trained lung cancer nurse specialists to see patients before and after diagnosis, to provide continuing support, and to facilitate communication between the secondary care team (including the MDT), the patient’s GP, the community team and the patient. Their role includes helping patients to access advice and support whenever they need it. [D]

Patients who have lung cancer suitable for radical treatment or chemotherapy, or need radiotherapy or ablative treatment for relief of symptoms, should be treated without undue delay, according to the Welsh Assembly Government and Department of Health recommendations (within 31 days of the decision to treat and within 62 days of their urgent referral). [D]

Patients who cannot be offered curative treatment, and are candidates for palliative radiotherapy, may either be observed until symptoms arise and then treated, or be treated with palliative radiotherapy immediately. [A]

When patients finish their treatment a personal follow-up plan should be discussed and agreed with them after discussion with the professionals involved in the patient’s care. GPs should be informed of the plan. [D(GPP)]

After completion of their treatment, patients with an expectation of life of more than 3 months should have access to protocol-controlled, nurse-led follow-up. [A]

Patients who have had attempted curative surgery for NSCLC, or radical radiotherapy should be followed up routinely by a member of the MDT for up to 9 months to check for post-treatment complications. Thoracic imaging should be part of the review. [D]

For patients who have had attempted curative surgery for NSCLC, any routine follow-up should not extend beyond 5 years. [D]

Patients who have had palliative radiotherapy or chemotherapy should be followed up routinely at 1 month after completion of treatment. A chest X-ray should be part of the review if clinically indicated. [D]

Patients with lung cancer – in particular those with a better prognosis – should be encouraged to stop smoking. [D]

The opinions and experiences of lung cancer patients and carers should be collected and used to improve the delivery of lung cancer services. Patients should receive feedback on any action taken as a result of such surveys. [D(GPP)]

1.8.3 Research Recommendations

The guideline development group made a number of recommendations for research in areas where research is lacking. They selected 5 of these that were considered to be the highest priority. These are:

- Additional research is needed into whether the use of low-dose CT in early diagnosis of patients at high risk of developing lung cancer has an effect on the mortality of lung cancer. A randomised trial should compare no intervention with low-dose CT performed at baseline and then annually for 5 years. [D]

- Further research is needed into whether the diagnostic accuracy and efficacy of FDG-PET scanning in follow-up of patients after radical treatment for lung cancer to investigate possible recurrence of the disease. [D]

- Further research is needed into the diagnostic accuracy and efficacy of FDG-PET scanning in staging patients with SCLC. [D]

- Further research is required to assess the diagnostic accuracy and efficacy of FDG-PET in the assessment of tumour response to chemotherapy and radiotherapy. [D]

1.8.3.1 Staging

- Further research is needed into the diagnostic accuracy and efficacy of FDG-PET scanning in follow-up of patients after radical treatment for lung cancer to investigate possible recurrence of the disease. [D]

- Further research is needed into the diagnostic accuracy and efficacy of FDG-PET scanning in staging patients with SCLC. [D]

- Further research is required to assess the diagnostic accuracy and efficacy of FDG-PET in the assessment of tumour response to chemotherapy and radiotherapy. [D]

1.8.3.2 Surgery for NSCLC

- In stage I A and IB NSCLC, further randomised trials on the survival and morbidity after limited resection in comparison to lobar resection for small lung tumours (less than 2 cm) are needed.
1.8.3.5 Combination treatment for NSCLC

- Prospective randomised trials should be conducted on the effect of surgery and quality of life of combination treatment compared to no treatment or treatment with chemotherapy or chemoradiotherapy.

1.8.3.6 Endobronchial Therapy with curative intent for NSCLC

- Further research is required to determine the benefit of endobronchial therapy (photodynamic therapy, brachytherapy, cryotherapy, electrocautery, Nd-YAG laser ablation) used as curative treatment in patients with early-stage NSCLC not suitable for conventional treatment.

1.8.3.7 Small Cell Lung Cancer

- Clinical trials should be conducted to determine the impact of prophylactic cranial irradiation compared to no prophylactic treatment in terms of survival, quality of life, and radiographic complete response at distant metastatic sites.

1.8.3.8 Palliative Interventions and Supportive and Palliative care

- Further research is required to determine the benefit of non-drug treatments for symptom relief, compared to no treatment or other drug based treatments, in terms of symptom relief and performance status for patients with lung cancer.

1.8.3.9 Service Organisation

- For patients who have had attempted curative treatment and have completed their initial follow-up, trials should examine the duration of follow-up and whether regular routine follow-up is better than symptom-led follow-up in terms of survival, symptom control and quality of life.

1.8.4 Algorithm

**General Principles**

**Information and support**

- Give all patients diagnosed with lung cancer verbal and written information on all aspects of their diagnosis, treatment and care, in a form that is tailored to their needs. D (GPP)
- Discuss treatment options and plans with the patient, and make decisions on treatment and care jointly with the patient. Treatment plans should be tailored around the patient’s needs and wishes to be involved and his or her capacity to make decisions. D (GPP)
- Encourage patients with lung cancer – particularly those with a better prognosis – to stop smoking. D

**Referral**

- Offer urgent referral to lung cancer MDT (usually the chest physician) while waiting for chest X-ray results if any of the following are present: D
  - Persistent haemoptysis in a smoker or ex-smoker older than 40 years
  - Signs of superior vena cava obstruction (swelling of the face and/or neck with fixed elevation of jugular venous pressure – consider emergency referral)
  - Stridor (consider emergency referral).

**Organisation of care – key features**

- Lung cancer as an incidental finding: a second copy of the chest X-ray report should be sent to a member of the MDT – usually the chest physician. D (GPP)
- MDTs discuss care of all patients with a working diagnosis of lung cancer. D
- Early diagnosis clinics: provided where possible, to speed up diagnosis and reduce patient anxiety. A
- PET scanning: every cancer network should have a system of rapid access to FDG-PET scanning for eligible patients. D (GPP)
- Lung cancer nurse specialists: each cancer unit/centre should have one or more trained nurse specialists to provide continuing support to patients, and to facilitate communication between healthcare professionals. D
- Timing of treatment: patients suitable for radical treatment or chemoradiotherapy, or needing radiotherapy or ablative treatment for symptom relief, should be treated without undue delay, according to the Welsh Assembly Government and Department of Health recommendations (within 31 days of the decision to treat and within 62 days of their urgent referral). D
- Patients’ views: use the opinions and experiences of patients and carers to improve the delivery of lung cancer services, and give patients feedback on any action taken as a result. D (GPP)
Diagnosis of Lung Cancer

- Symptoms and signs (see page 4)
  - Chest X-ray
    - Chest X-ray normal?
      - Yes: low suspicion of lung cancer?
        - Yes: observe/manage patient
        - No: Chest physician suspects lung cancer?
          - Yes: CT scan
          - No: manage patient
      - No: urgent referral to chest physician member of MDT—clinical examination, history, blood test
    - Clinical signs indicate advanced metastatic disease?
      - Yes: chest physician suspects lung cancer?
        - Yes: CT scan
        - No: manage patient
      - No: CT negative or inconclusive?
        - Yes: evidence of advanced metastatic disease?
          - Yes: biopsy most accessible place
            - Central or peripheral lesion?
              - Yes: fit for bronchoscopy?
                - Yes: fit for percutaneous needle biopsy?
                  - Yes: further tests, such as PET surgical/invasive procedure
                    - Diagnosis possible with or without histology
                      - Yes: referal/surveillance
                      - No: negative result
                  - No: sputum cytology
                    - Negative result: referal/surveillance
                    - Positive result: histological confirmation not required
              - No: bronchoscopy
                - Sputum cytology
                  - Negative result: referal/surveillance
                  - Positive result: histological confirmation not required
          - No: biopsy most accessible place
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                      - Yes: referal/surveillance
                      - No: negative result
                  - No: sputum cytology
                    - Negative result: referal/surveillance
                    - Positive result: histological confirmation not required
              - No: bronchoscopy
                - Sputum cytology
                  - Negative result: referal/surveillance
                  - Positive result: histological confirmation not required

Staging of non-small cell lung cancer

- Clinical evaluation for distant metastases
  - Imaging and/or biopsy of potential metastatic sites:
    - Brain—MRI/CT
    - Bone—X-ray and bone scan or MRI if required
    - Liver and adrenals—CT if not performed already

Examine chest CT scan but:
- Consider other techniques such as ultrasound or surgical assessment for mediastinal and chest wall invasion as CT alone may not be reliable.
- Use MRI if necessary to assess extent of disease for superior sulcus tumours.
- NE: MRI scanning should not be routine in T-staging

- Is the patient in one of these groups?
  - A candidate for surgery?
  - A candidate for radical radiotherapy?
  - A candidate for radical combination treatment?
  - Has limited N2/3 disease (1–2 stations) of unknown pathological significance and is otherwise a surgical candidate?
    - Yes: PET scan
      - Yes: PET positive
        - Positive for mediastinal disease or distant metastases (define distant metastases or high probability that N2/3 disease is metastatic, for example there are chains of high FDG uptake)
        - Suspected for mediastinal disease or distant metastases
        - Negative for mediastinal disease and distant metastases
      - Negative: histological/histological confirmation of appropriate site
    - No: PET scan
      - PET not available

Histological sampling of suspected N2/3 disease (nodes with a short axis greater than 1 cm or CT for patients being considered for surgery or radical radiotherapy)

- Histological/histological confirmation not required
- Histological/histological confirmation of appropriate site

- Positive
- Negative
- Suspicious
- Negative
**Surgery (stages I to III)**

**Stages I and II**
- Surgical resection is recommended for patients with no medical contraindications and adequate lung function.
- Lobectomy is the procedure of choice for patients who can tolerate it.
- Consider limited resection or radical radiotherapy for patients who would not tolerate lobectomy because of comorbid disease or pulmonary compromise.
- Aim for clear surgical margins in all patients with stage I or II NSCLC undergoing surgery – usually lobectomy or pneumonectomy.
- Sleeve lobectomy is an acceptable alternative to pneumonectomy for patients with central tumour, and conserves functioning lung.

**Stages II and III**
- Aim for complete resection for patients with T3 NSCLC with chest wall involvement who are undergoing surgery, by either extrapleural or en bloc chest wall resection.
- The MDT should assess patients with stage IIIA (N2) NSCLC because surgery alone is associated with a relatively poor prognosis.
- Sleeve lobectomy is an acceptable alternative to pneumonectomy for patients with central tumour, and conserves functioning lung.

All patients having surgery
- Perform systematic lymph node sampling to provide accurate pathological staging.

Radiotherapy alone (stages I to III)
- Radical radiotherapy is indicated for patients with stage I, II or III NSCLC who have good performance status (WHO 0, 1) and whose disease can be encompassed in a radiotherapy treatment volume without undue risk of normal tissue damage.
- All patients should undergo pulmonary function tests (including lung volumes and transfer factor) before having radical radiotherapy.
- Patients who have poor lung function but are otherwise suitable for radical radiotherapy should still be offered radiotherapy, provided the volume of irradiated lung is small.
- Offer the CHART regimen to:
  - patients with stages IIIA or IIIB NSCLC who are eligible for radical radiotherapy and who cannot tolerate or do not wish to have chemoradiotherapy.
  - if CHART is not available, offer conventionally fractionated radiotherapy to a dose of 64–66 Gy in 32–33 fractions over 6 1/2 weeks or 55 Gy in 20 fractions over 4 weeks.

Chemotherapy for patients with NSCLC (stages III and IV)
- Offer chemotherapy to patients with stage III or IV NSCLC and good performance status (WHO 0, 1 or a Karnofsky score of 80–100), to improve survival, disease control and quality of life.
- Chemotherapy should be a combination of:
  - a single third-generation drug (docetaxel, gemcitabine, paclitaxel or vinorelbine), plus
  - a platinum drug – carboplatin or cisplatin, taking account of their toxicities, efficacy and convenience.
- Single-agent chemotherapy with a third-generation drug can be offered to patients who cannot tolerate a platinum combination.
- Consider docetaxel monotherapy if second-line treatment is appropriate for patients with locally advanced or metastatic NSCLC in whom relapse has occurred after previous chemotherapy.

Combination treatment
- The following treatments are not recommended:
  - preoperative chemotherapy (except as part of a clinical trial).
  - preoperative radiotherapy.
  - postoperative radiotherapy after complete resection.
  - postoperative chemoradiotherapy for patients whose NSCLC is pathologically staged as II and III (except as part of a clinical trial).
- Consider postoperative radiotherapy after incomplete resection of the primary tumour, to improve local control.
- Offer adjuvant chemotherapy to patients who have had a complete resection, with discussion of the risks and benefits.
- Offer sequential chemoradiotherapy to patients with stage III NSCLC, who are not suitable for surgery but are eligible for radical radiotherapy.

**Radiotherapy alone (stages I to III)**
- Offer sequential chemoradiotherapy to patients with stage I or II NSCLC who are medically inoperable but suitable for radical radiotherapy.

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This section focuses on palliative interventions and supportive and palliative care for patients with lung cancer and therefore only evidence specific to lung cancer was reviewed. An absence of evidence does not imply that nothing can be done to help, and supportive and palliative care multidisciplinary teams – in particular specialist palliative care teams – have an important role in symptom control.

Supportive and palliative care should be provided by general and specialist palliative care providers in accordance with the NICE Cancer Service Guidance ‘Improving supportive and palliative care for adults with cancer’ (available from www.nice.org.uk/csgsp).

Identify and refer without delay patients who may benefit from specialist palliative care services.

Patients who cannot be offered curative treatment, and are candidates for palliative radiotherapy, can be either observed until symptoms arise and then treated or treated immediately.

Non-drug interventions for breathlessness should be delivered by a multidisciplinary group, co-ordinated by a professional with expertise in the techniques (such as a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist). Patients should have access to this support in all care settings.

Patients should be offered general supportive measures – including drugs – for symptom control, in addition to the specific interventions listed in the table below.

### Symptom Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Breathlessness** | • External beam radiotherapy A  
• Non-drug interventions (psychosocial support, breathing control and coping strategies) A |
| **Intrinsic airway obstruction** | • De-bulking bronchoscopic procedures, D  
• Endobronchial therapy (photodynamic therapy, brachytherapy) for endobronchial symptoms not palliated by other means, D |
| **Extrinsic airway compression** | • Stents, D  
• Pleural aspiration/drainage for pleural effusion, B  
• Talc pleurodesis if symptoms improve after aspiration/drainage of fluid, B |
| **Cough** | • External beam radiotherapy, A |
| **Haemoptysis** | • External beam radiotherapy, A |
| **Chest pain** | • External beam radiotherapy, A |
| **Hoarseness** | • Referral to ear, nose and throat specialist D (GPP) |
| **Superior vena cava obstruction** | • Chemotherapy and radiotherapy, depending on stage of disease and performance status, A  
• Stent insertion for immediate relief of severe symptoms or after failure of earlier treatment, B |
| **Symptoms from brain metastases** | • Corticosteroids and radiotherapy, D |
| **Spinal cord compression** | • Corticosteroids, radiotherapy and surgery where appropriate, within 24 hours, D  
• Early referral to oncology physiotherapist and occupational therapist D (GPP) |
| **Symptoms from bone metastases** | • Single-fraction radiotherapy if standard analgesic treatments are inadequate, B |
| **Other symptoms** | • Management by multidisciplinary groups including supportive and palliative care professionals should address other symptoms, including weight loss, loss of appetite, difficulty swallowing, and depression, D (GPP) |
Follow-up

- When patients finish their treatment, a personal follow-up plan should be discussed and agreed with them, after discussion with other professionals involved in the patient’s care. The patient’s GP should be informed of the plan. D (GPP)
- After completion of treatment, patients with an expectation of life greater than 3 months should be offered the option of protocol-controlled nurse-led follow-up. A
- Patients who have had attempted curative surgery for NSCLC or radical radiotherapy should be followed up routinely by a member of the MDT for up to 9 months, to check for post-treatment complications. The review should include thoracic imaging. D
- Routine follow-up should not extend beyond 5 years after attempted curative surgery for NSCLC. D
- Patients who have had palliative radiotherapy or chemotherapy should be followed up routinely 1 month after completion of treatment. The review should include a chest X-ray if clinically indicated. D

2 Methodology

2.1 Guideline Methodology

The guideline was commissioned by NICE and developed in accordance with the guideline development process outlined in The Guideline Development Process – Information for National Collaborating Centres and Guideline Development Groups16. The guideline was commissioned by NICE and developed in accordance with the guideline development process outlined in The Guideline Development Process – Information for National Collaborating Centres and Guideline Development Groups16.

2.2 Review of the clinical literature

The aim of the literature review was to identify and synthesise relevant evidence within the published literature, in order to answer specific clinical questions. Searches were performed using generic and specific filters, relevant medical subject heading terms and free text terms. Only studies on patients with lung cancer (or where the majority of patients recruited were those with lung cancer) were included, with one exception. When we considered the treatment of pleural effusion, studies on patients with mixed primary sites were included as specific data was not available and the GDG agreed that the site of the primary tumour would not determine treatment in this case. Details of all literature searches are available in appendix six. The scope and the clinical questions can be found in appendix seven and eight respectively.

Search filters to identify systematic reviews, randomised controlled trials and observational studies were adapted from the SIGN methodological search filters (http://www.sign.ac.uk/methodology/filters.html). The lung cancer search strategy stem was devised in collaboration with SIGN. It was then combined with independently devised search strategies for each section of the guideline. The following databases were searched for all section:

- The Cochrane Library (up to Issue 4, 2003)
- Medline (OVID) 1966-2003 (week 52)
- Embase (OVID) 1980-2003 (week 52)

The Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) and PsychInfo were also searched for relevant clinical questions. Identification of high quality systematic reviews determined the date ranges searched for each clinical question. No language restrictions were applied to the search but identified foreign papers were not requested or reviewed. The cut off date for the NCC-AC literature search was 31st December 2003. In order to be consistent and systematic we did not consider papers after this date. This decision was made for pragmatic reasons of work load and means that very current data will be missed.

There was no systematic attempt to search for all the ‘grey literature’ (conferences, abstracts, theses and unpublished literature). However, we searched ASCO (http://www.asco.org) for interventional abstracts to identify and verify published papers. We searched for guidelines and reports from relevant websites, including the following listed below. Bibliographies of identified reports and guidelines were also checked to identify relevant literature.

- National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) (www.nice.org.uk)
- National electronic Library for Health (NeLH) (http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/)
2.3 Hierarchy of clinical evidence

There are many different methods of ranking the evidence and there has been considerable debate about what system is best. A number of initiatives are currently under way to find an international consensus on the subject, but until a decision is reached on the most appropriate system, for the NICE guidelines the Institute advises the National Collaborating Centres to use the system for evidence shown in Table 2. This is the same system that the Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (SIGN) used to evaluate the evidence in the areas they reviewed. For more details on the methods used by SIGN, please see their website (www.sign.ac.uk).

The ranking system described above covers studies of treatment effectiveness and is less appropriate for studies reporting diagnostic tests of accuracy. Since there is no validated ranking system for diagnostic tests, NICE has developed a hierarchy for evidence of this nature which takes into account factors likely to affect the validity of these studies (Table 3). The NCC-AC was the first Centre to pilot this hierarchy and it has yet to be systematically tested.
2.4 Health economics methods

It is important to investigate whether health services are clinically effective and also cost-effective (that is, value for money). If a particular diagnostic or treatment strategy were found to yield little health gain relative to the resources used, then it could be advantageous to re-deploy resources to other activities (either in lung cancer or beyond) that yield greater health gain.

To assess the cost-effectiveness of each recommendation, a comprehensive systematic review of the economic literature relating to lung cancer was conducted. For selected components of the guideline original cost-effectiveness analyses were performed. The primary criteria applied for an intervention to be considered cost-effective were either:

a) the intervention dominated other relevant strategies (that is it is both less costly in terms of resource use and more clinically effective compared with the other relevant alternative strategies); or

b) the intervention cost less than £30,000 per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY) gained compared with the next best strategy (and compared with best supportive care). However, between £20,000 and £30,000 per QALY, judgements about the acceptability of the intervention as an effective use of NHS resources will make more explicit reference to such factors as the degree of uncertainty surrounding the calculation of cost-effectiveness, the innovative nature of the intervention and the particular features of the condition and the population receiving it.

2.4.1 Literature review for Health Economics

We obtained published economic evidence from a systematic search of the following databases:

- Health Economic Evaluations Database (HEED)
- NHS Economic Evaluations Database (NHS EED)
- NHS Economic Evaluations Database (NHS EED)

For those clinical areas we reviewed, the information scientists used the same search strategy as for the clinical questions, substituting an economics filter for a study type filter. For those clinical area's SIGN reviewed, the information scientists had to design a filter specifically for the health economists.

Each search strategy was designed to find any applied study estimating the cost or cost-effectiveness of some aspect of lung cancer. A health economist reviewed abstracts and database reviews of papers. Relevant references in the bibliographies of reviewed papers were also identified and reviewed.

Given the diversity of economic studies, it was not possible to determine a general exclusion criterion based on study quality. Hence all studies were included in the evidence tables (including abstracts) and study quality and applicability are discussed in the review. Papers were only excluded from the evidence tables and review if:

- results were not reported specifically for lung cancer patients (although occasionally studies were found and included, where most but not all patients had lung cancer, e.g. in comparisons of different types of thoracic surgery);
- the study did not contain any original data on cost or cost-effectiveness (i.e., it was a review or a clinical paper);
- the analysis was not incremental and was not described adequately to allow incremental analysis (so studies reporting only average cost-effectiveness ratios were excluded unless they provided data to allow the calculation of incremental cost-effectiveness ratios).

For one topic – treatment of pleural effusion - it was decided to include data not specific to lung cancer. In this case, all studies were reviewed for malignant pleural effusion, on the assumption that the site of the primary tumour would not determine treatment. For key papers where costs were in a currency other than pounds sterling, US dollars or euros, the results were converted to pounds sterling using the relevant purchasing power parity for the study year. Most studies were recent during a period of relatively low inflation, therefore inflation to current prices was not considered necessary.

Each study was categorised as one of the following: cost analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis or cost-utility analysis (i.e., cost-effectiveness analysis with effectiveness measured in terms of QALYs). We did not find any cost benefit analyses (studies that put a monetary value on health gain). Studies labelled as ‘cost consequences analysis’ or ‘cost minimisation analysis’ were simply categorised as cost analyses, since the lack of an overall measure of health gain prevents such studies being considered full economic evaluations.

2.4.2 Cost-effectiveness modelling

Specific topics were selected for original economic analysis if there was a likelihood that the recommendation made would substantially change clinical practice in the NHS and have important consequences for resource use.

In three cases there was not a relevant economic evaluation in the published literature: CHART versus conventional radical radiotherapy for NSCLC, FDG-PET in the work-up to radical radiotherapy for NSCLC, and platinum versus non-platinum drug regimens in the treatment of SCLC.

In a fourth case, economic evaluations had been previously published but had substantial limitations - FDG-PET in the work-up to curative surgery for NSCLC.

Methods used depended on the question being analysed, however, the following principles were followed:

- The GDG was consulted during the construction and interpretation of each model.
- Each model was based on the best evidence from the systematic review.
- Model assumptions were reported fully and transparently.
- The results were subject to thorough sensitivity analysis and limitations discussed.
- Costs were calculated from a health services perspective.

2.5 Forming and grading the recommendations

NICE guideline recommendations are graded according to the strength of the supporting evidence, which is assessed from the design of each study (see Table 2 and Table 3). The grading system currently used is presented in Table 4 and Table 5.

The Guideline Development Group was presented with summaries (text and evidence tables) of the best available research evidence to answer the clinical questions. Recommendations were based on, and explicitly linked to, the evidence that supported them.

The evidence tables can be found in appendix one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>At least one meta-analysis, systematic review, or RCT rated as 1++, and directly applicable to the target population, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A body of evidence including studies rated as 2+, directly applicable to the target population, or demonstrating overall consistency of results, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A body of evidence including studies rated as 2+, directly applicable to the target population and demonstrating overall consistency of results, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Evidence level 3 or 4, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (CPP)</td>
<td>A good practice point (CPP) is a recommendation for best practice based on the experience of the Guideline Development Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Grading of recommendations**
The Group worked on an informal consensus basis. The recommendations were then graded according to the level of evidence upon which they were based.

Recommendations based on studies assessing the diagnostic accuracy of tests are also classified according to the strength of the supporting evidence. The classification system used for this guideline is presented in Table 5. It is currently being piloted and has not yet been systematically tested by NICE. Some recommendations in this guideline have two grades because they are based on both diagnostic and effectiveness evidence.

### Table 5: Classification of recommendations for studies of the accuracy of diagnostic tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Level of Evidence (See Table 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (DS)</td>
<td>Studies with levels of evidence Ia or Ib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (DS)</td>
<td>Studies with levels of evidence II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (DS)</td>
<td>Studies with levels of evidence III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (DS)</td>
<td>Studies with levels of evidence IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The usefulness of a classification system based solely on the level of evidence has been questioned because it does not take into consideration the importance of the recommendation in changing practice and improving patient care. It is worth noting that NICE is currently assessing the best way of presenting recommendations for future guidelines.

## 3 Access to Services

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we examine access to services. In particular we examine the delay between patients first experiencing symptoms and their presentation at their general practitioner (GP), interventions that may encourage patients to present sooner and the key symptoms and signs for which a GP should make a referral. This latter issue is particularly problematic because the symptoms of lung cancer, such as cough, are common among smokers and patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Information on the delays before treatment of lung cancer and the effect of using rapid access clinics are discussed in chapter 13 (Service organisation).

Although this chapter discusses presentation to and referral by GPs it should be noted that many other management pathways for lung cancer patients exist. A regional randomised stratified analysis of the management pathways of 400 patients, found 80 such pathways and that more than 50% of patients did not present to hospital with a chest x-ray suspicious of lung cancer.

### 3.2 Methodology

We conducted a systematic literature search and review according to the methods described in chapter 2. The search strategy is shown in appendix six.

### 3.3 Patient delay in presentation to general practitioners

We found no research that specifically addressed the effect of delay in presentation to GPs on the outcome for patients with lung cancer. However, a survey of lung cancer patients and carers in the UK looked at the delay between patients first experiencing symptoms of lung cancer and reporting them to a GP. The survey revealed that for patients who reported visiting their GP because of chest symptoms there was a wide variation in delay in presentation between 3 weeks and 3 months (Level 3). One Swedish study of 134 patients noted similar results (see Table 7) finding that the mean delay from first symptom to presentation was 43 days (median 21 days) (Level 3).

Patient communication and support are discussed more fully in chapter 12 (Palliative Interventions and Supportive and Palliative Care). It is, however, important to stress that at diagnosis and throughout treatment and care, patients are given information, both verbal and written, on aspects of their disease such as prognosis, treatment options and anticipated benefits and side effects in a form that is tailored to the needs of the individual patient. Good communication between patients and professionals must be encouraged and patients involved in the decision making process on their personal treatment and care plan.

We searched for studies on the effectiveness of interventions at encouraging patients to present to healthcare services sooner with symptoms of lung cancer. Better provision of information to the public on how to recognise symptoms has been suggested as a way of getting people with suspected cancer to present to GPs. Campaigns such as 'lung cancer awareness month' (The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and Macmillan Cancer Relief) have been run to address this and although outcomes are difficult to assess and have not been formally evaluated, an increase in calls to telephone helplines was noted. There is scope for additional innovative and imaginative ways to engage those at risk.
The Department of Health have issued referral guidelines for suspected cancer in 2000\(^2\) and we found no recent evidence with which to update these guidelines. The guideline development group support these recommendations (Level 4). These guidelines state that:

Urgent referral for a chest x-ray should be made when a patient presents with:

- Persistent haemoptysis in smokers/ex-smokers over 40 years of age
- Signs of superior vena caval obstruction (swelling of the face/neck with fixed elevation of jugular venous pressure)
- Stridor

Emergency referral should be considered for patients with superior vena caval obstruction or stridor

If a chest x-ray is suggestive or suspicious of lung cancer a referral should be offered even if the chest x-ray is normal.

Where the GP is suspicious of lung cancer a referral should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the MDT, usually the chest physician while awaiting the result of a chest x-ray, if any of the following are present:

- Persistent haemoptysis in smokers/ex-smokers over 40 years of age
- Signs of superior vena caval obstruction (swelling of the face/neck with fixed elevation of jugular venous pressure)
- Stridor

Emergency referral should be considered for patients with superior vena caval obstruction or stridor

The Department of Health guidelines on referral\(^2\). No economic evidence was found in this area.

The Department of Health has commissioned NICE to produce an update of the original GP referral guidelines for suspected cancers, including lung cancer, and these are due to be published in March 2005. NICE commissioned the National Collaborating Centre for Primary Care to produce evidence based guidelines on referral.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms and Signs</th>
<th>Range of frequency/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>8-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Loss</td>
<td>0-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyspnoea</td>
<td>3-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest Pain</td>
<td>20-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haemoptysis</td>
<td>6-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone Pain</td>
<td>6-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubbing</td>
<td>0-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>0-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>0-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior Vena Cava Obstruction (SVCO)</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysphagia</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheezing and stridor</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a chest x-ray or chest computerised tomography (CT) scan suggests lung cancer (including pleural effusion and slowly resolving consolidation), patients should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer multidisciplinary team (MDT), usually a chest physician. [D]

If the chest x-ray is normal but there is a high suspicion of lung cancer, patients should be offered urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer MDT, usually the chest physician. [D]

Patients should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer MDT, usually the chest physician, while awaiting the result of a chest x-ray, if any of the following are present: [D]

- persistent haemoptysis in smokers/ex-smokers over 40 years of age
- signs of superior vena caval obstruction (swelling of the face/neck with fixed elevation of jugular venous pressure)
- stridor.
Emergency referral should be considered for patients with superior vena cava obstruction or strider.

3.5.2 Research Recommendations

Further research is needed into whether the use of low-dose CT in early diagnosis of patients at high risk of developing lung cancer has an effect on the mortality of lung cancer. A randomised trial should compare no intervention with low-dose CT performed at baseline and then annually for 5 years.

Further research is needed into the symptoms and signs associated with early- and late-stage lung cancer and the factors associated with delay in presentation. For patients diagnosed with lung cancer, analysis should be undertaken of the symptoms at presentation, the time between onset of symptoms and presentation, the stage at presentation and the reasons for delay in presentation.

4 Diagnosis

4.1 Introduction

Patients with lung cancer generally present with symptoms and signs of the tumour as described previously (e.g. cough, dyspnoea, weight loss, anorexia, chest pain, haemoptysis and hoarseness). These symptoms are characteristic of lung cancer but many can be indicative of a number of other more minor diseases or ailments. It is possible for a tumour to grow quite large before causing any symptoms. In addition, a proportion of patients are diagnosed after their tumour is picked up incidentally on CXR and may not present with any of the classic symptoms of lung cancer. Solitary pulmonary nodules (SPN) are commonly encountered in clinical practice and are usually defined as lesions up to 3cm in size. Determining whether a solitary pulmonary nodule is benign or malignant is a frequently encountered problem requiring a multidisciplinary approach, often involving further imaging and intervention.

A CXR is almost invariably performed as the initial investigation. The vast majority of patients will then have both a computerised tomography (CT) scan and either bronchoscopy or image guided biopsy to obtain a tissue diagnosis. The patients' clinical status, the tumour stage, the cell type and patient preferences determine the diagnostic and staging tests that are most suitable. Accurate diagnosis is important for the future management for the patient.

In this chapter we review the evidence for the main diagnostic tests that can aid the clinician to establish a diagnosis. Formal staging will be discussed in the next chapter. However, in practice, staging is performed alongside diagnosis and some of the techniques discussed will provide both diagnostic and staging information.

4.2 Techniques included in this review

In this review we have examined the following techniques used for diagnosing lung cancer: CXR, CT, radionuclide imaging, positron emission tomography (PET), sputum cytology, bronchoscopy, percutaneous needle biopsy, biopsies of sites other than lung, anterior mediastinotomy, surgical thoracoscopy with biopsy and thoracotomy. Diagnostic techniques that examine mediastinal lymph nodes (e.g. mediastinoscopy) will be covered in the chapter on staging.

In this chapter we discuss imaging modalities used to diagnose lung cancer followed by techniques that aim to achieve tissue confirmation.

4.3 Methodology

The guideline review team undertook new systematic reviews of all of the techniques listed above. Guidelines on diagnosis issued by the American College of Chest Physicians in 2003 were included as the review was judged to have been systematic. A comprehensive systematic review published in 2001 was also considered but was less up to date for most topics. Studies of diagnostic accuracy were quality assessed using a system being piloted (described in the chapter on methodology) and studies of the effectiveness of the test at changing patient management were assessed as for all other studies of clinical effectiveness. For studies of diagnostic accuracy we report the sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value (PPV) and the negative predictive value (NPV). Papers were rejected if the true positives, true negatives, false positives and false negatives could not be calculated.

The search strategy is described in appendix six.
4.4 Imaging

4.4.1 Chest X-Ray

When there is a suspicion of lung cancer, the CXR is usually the first investigation performed. Lung cancer usually presents itself radiographically as a solitary pulmonary nodule or pulmonary mass, pulmonary collapse, mediastinal lymphadenopathy, a pleural effusion or as an area of consolidation.

We identified one systematic review on the topic that searched literature from 1966 to 2000. We conducted our own systematic review in which we searched for literature back to 1994. However, although CXR is in common usage throughout the world as a diagnostic technique for lung cancer, there has been little work on the subject. The systematic review found only a small number of studies, which included patients of all stages and cell types and the sensitivity and specificity of chest X-rays could not be derived for a population applicable to UK patients awaiting diagnosis.

The typical effective dose received by the patient undergoing a chest X-ray is 0.02mSv, which is equivalent to a lifetime additional risk of fatal cancer per examination of 1 in a million.

Although there is a lack of published evidence, the guideline development group considered that the CXR is a mandatory first line of investigation, enabling decisions on the next choice of investigation to be made. It is unfortunately an insensitive method of examination, and as such, if lung cancer is suspected clinically and the CXR is negative the patient should still be referred to a chest physician. Where a CXR is incidentally suggestive of lung cancer, the guideline development group agreed that patients should be identified to a chest physician within the local lung cancer multidisciplinary team (MDT) so that their further management can be initiated as soon as possible and to prevent an oversight occurring from an unexpected malignancy. The MDT should have a mechanism in place to follow up these reports to ensure the patient’s GP has a management plan in place. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

4.4.2 Computerised tomography (CT)

A diagnosis of lung cancer can be achieved in a number of ways using CT. Firstly, the overall CT appearances may enable a diagnosis of malignancy to be made, such as identifying either metastatic disease or evidence of local tumour invasion into the chest wall or mediastinum. In addition, careful examination of the morphology of the lung lesion, its degree of enhancement or demonstration of growth on sequential examinations may allow a presumptive radiological diagnosis of malignancy.

Morphological Features

Previous researchers have suggested a number of morphological features particularly characteristic of benign solitary pulmonary nodules (SPN). These include various patterns of calcification such as diffuse, concentric, laminar, dense central or a ‘popcorn’ pattern of calcification. However, we identified only two studies that examined the accuracy with which these features could be used to predict whether a nodule is malignant (Table B - Appendix 1, separate document). One study found that nodules with diffuse calcification were benign in 100% of 154 cases (specificity 63%, PPV 77.5%, NPV 100%) (Level II). A more recent study examined various morphological signs of 104 patients with SPNs, using spiral CT and high resolution CT (HRCT). They found that the sensitivity was 89% and 91% with spiral and HRCT respectively and that the specificity was 61% (spiral CT) and 57% (HRCT) (Level I). These figures were based on using any one of the following features: presence of spicules, the vessel sign, necrotic areas, circumscribed pleural thickening, inhomogeneity, ground-glass opacity of lung parenchyma adjacent to SPN, lesion density, pleural retraction or bronchus sign. Thus, sensitivity and specificity when using morphological features of SPNs on CT to predict malignancy does not seem to be good enough to allow confident decisions about whether to pursue further investigation of a suspect SPN.

Growth Rate

The growth rate of lesions has been used as a predictor of malignancy, in particular stability of the lesion size over time has been reported as a reliable sign that the lesion is benign although this too has been challenged. There are also major practical difficulties in measuring small size changes. Firstly, the average life expectancy of SCLC patients is too short to allow long-term assessment (the average doubling time of SCLC is 30 days compared to 100 days for NSCLC). Secondly, long evaluation times mean that there is a risk of tumour spread. Lastly, accurate measurement of small changes is affected by exact positioning of the nodule. Two recent studies of SPNs in small groups of patients found that a repeat scan could detect growth rate indicative of malignancy with a sensitivity and a specificity both of 100%. These encouraging preliminary results, if confirmed, indicate that repeated thin section could be used to detect lung malignant SPNs (Level I).

Contrast Enhancement

Two studies examined the differential uptake of contrast agent in determining the diagnosis of an SPN. The sensitivity and specificity ranged between 88-100% and 36-76.9% respectively. The PPV and NPV ranged between 62.3-90.2% and 71.4-100% respectively (Level III). As with the other CT methods of diagnosis, the low specificity is problematic.

Overall, CT provides anatomical information enabling the exact positioning of the lesion, and some results have shown that CT can have a high sensitivity. However, the specificity is poor in a number of studies. The typical effective dose received by the patient undergoing a chest CT is 8mSv, which is equivalent to a lifetime additional risk of fatal cancer per examination of 1 in 2500.

A CT scan provides useful information that can be used for decisions on further investigations such as bronchoscopy or needle biopsy in the establishment of a diagnosis of lung cancer.

4.4.3 Positron Emission Tomography

Unlike imaging with X-rays or MRI, positron emission tomography allows functional information of cells to be collected. 18F-deoxyglucose (FDG) is generally used in the evaluation of lung cancer patients. FDG is a glucose analogue labelled with positron emitting fluorine. Most malignant tumours have a higher glucose metabolism than normal tissue and therefore take up more FDG than the surrounding tissue and emit a greater number of positrons. Thus, areas of malignancy show up as areas of greater activity on the scan. The majority of the PET evidence is from dedicated full ring PET scanners. In this document the use of PET therefore excludes gamma camera PET and half ring systems. The data is derived from scanning patient from the brain to at least mid thigh and using local views of thorax. The development of PET-CT systems is likely to result in the need for a single scan from skull vertex to mid thigh and may not need local views of the chest.

Presently there are few PET scanners in England and Welsh hospitals and the technique is not widely used for the diagnosis of lung cancer patients. There is however interest in its use in the investigation of solitary pulmonary nodules and other focal lung lesions and a number of studies have investigated its use in diagnosis.

A meta-analysis was found for which a systematic review of literature was performed from January 1966 and September 2000 using the Medline and Cancerlit databases. This review included studies that included at least 10 subjects with pulmonary nodules or masses (at least 5 with malignant lesions), and 2) included enough data to allow calculation of sensitivity and specificity. We updated this review by searching for papers published after September 2000 on Medline and searching all years of Embase as this database had not been covered by the earlier review.

As well as the meta-analysis by Gould et al, we found 13 other papers that met our inclusion criteria. These are shown in Table 9. Gould et al found 40 studies which met their inclusion criteria. They found the sensitivity to be 96.8% (read from a receiver operator characteristic curve) at the median specificity of 77.8% (Level II). The range of sensitivities in the 13 additional diagnostic studies is 72-100% and the specificity ranges from 67-100% (Level II).

The spatial resolution of full ring PET scanners is about 7-8mm and thus there has been some concern that PET would not be effective at imaging smaller...
nODULES (≥1.5cm). We have no evidence to confirm this as the studies either did not test nodules smaller than 1.5cm or did not break down the results sufficiently to allow this analysis. However, the metabolic activity of the tumour is likely to be the major determinant rather than size alone.

One study assessed management change due to the use of PET in diagnosis by using a before and after questionnaire approach49 (Table 10). According to referring physicians, PET resulted in beneficial change of treatment in 50% of patients. Cancellation of surgery was the most frequent change in treatment after PET (35% of patients) and improved diagnostic understanding solely based on PET was reported in 26% of patients50. (Level 2+)

An added advantage of FDG-PET in SPN assessment is that metastatic disease can also be assessed at the one scanning visit and either provide an alternative site to biopsy or confirm whether a patient, who is proven to have NSCLC, can proceed to operation (see chapter 5 on staging).

The typical effective dose received by the patient undergoing a PET scan with 400MBq of FDG is 10mSv, which is equivalent to a lifetime additional risk of fatal cancer per examination of 1 in 2000 (compared with a natural lifetime risk of 1 in 3).

In summary, PET appears to have a good sensitivity and a reasonable specificity for detection of malignant SPNPs and masses. However, for small nodules (<1.5cm) the results may be less reliable. Whether the specificity of PET is acceptable is debatable. However, since prevalence affects the probability of finding malignancy in the test, PET may therefore be useful for low risk patients, meaning that one could be quite confident about accepting the results of a negative scan. In practice, for those of intermediate risk, a tissue biopsy would be performed, but if this was not possible or had failed then PET may be useful as an additional technique of investigation. The risk is dependent on a variety of clinical and radiographic variables, such as smoking history, haemoptysis, and size. As such, duration of follow up and decision on biopsy will vary, although the presence of a negative PET scan enables a watch and wait policy to be implemented. If the FDG PET is positive then further confirmatory investigation is required (see sections below on tissue sampling).

It is anticipated that the next wave of FDG-PET scanners will be integrated PET-CT scanners and it is likely that the diagnostic accuracy will continue to improve.

4.4.4 NeoSPECT

NeoSPECT is a radiopharmaceutical containing Tc-99m depreotide and is able to bind to somatostatin receptors in tumour tissue to a greater extent than normal tissue. This localisation to tumour should result in more gamma photons being emitted from the tumour than surrounding tissue and therefore make the tumour capable of being localised by a gamma camera.

Two prospective diagnostic studies45,51 examined the use of NeoSPECT in the differential diagnosis of solitary pulmonary nodules on a total of 153 patients. (Table 11) The sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV for the first study are 97%, 73%, 92% and 86% respectively and for the second study 100%, 43%, 64% and 100% respectively. (Level 1b and II).

The typical effective dose received by the patient undergoing a NeoSPECT scan with Tc-99m is 11.84 mSv for a typical injected activity of 740 MBq, which is equivalent to a lifetime additional risk of fatal cancer per examination of 1 in 1700.

There is limited evidence available on NeoSPECT at the present time. The results in one study45 show reasonable diagnostic accuracy, although the specificity is poor. At present, there is insufficient data to comment on the utility of NeoSPECT.

4.5 Tissue confirmation

4.5.1 Sputum cytology

Sputum cytology can occasionally detect pulmonary tumours in the asymptomatic patient and is one of the least invasive methods of detecting lung cancer. Our literature search identified a recent systematic review46 and one further diagnostic study that was not included in the review47. Poooled data from 28,477 patients in 16 studies in the review gave a sensitivity of 66%, a specificity of 99%, a PPV of 91% and a NPV of 84%46. However, the indication for performing sputum cytology in these patients was mixed, which may have led to the large degree of heterogeneity in the results (Table 12). In the same review, a selection of 8 studies with 2455 patients, tested prior to bronchoscopy (and therefore with a suspicion of lung cancer), gave a pooled sensitivity of 33% and a PPV of 11%44. The additional diagnostic study, not included in the review48 tested 60 consecutive patients suspected of lung cancer. Again, in this population of suspected lung cancer patients, the sensitivity was found to be rather low at 3.3%, the specificity was 94%, the PPV was 93% and the NPV was 38% (Level II).

The systematic review46 included 17 studies that examined the effect of location of the pulmonary nodule or mass. Most studies showed better sensitivity for centrally located masses compared to peripheral masses (pooled sensitivity 71% vs. 49% respectively) (Level II).

In conclusion, it appears that sputum cytology has a rather low sensitivity for detecting malignancy of peripheral masses but for central masses it may be a useful diagnostic technique, particularly for those patients unable to tolerate or unwilling to have bronchoscopy or other invasive diagnostic tests. We found no studies on morbidity associated with the technique.

4.5.2 Bronchoscopy

Confirmation of a diagnosis of lung cancer can be achieved by using bronchoscopy for patients who are able and willing to tolerate the procedure. Guidelines on assessment of patients’ fitness for bronchoscopy have been published by the British Thoracic Society52. Imaging prior to bronchoscopy can help to locate the position of the lesion and will improve the success of the technique (see section 4.5.2.1). We identified one systematic review53 and two additional diagnostic studies54,55 on the use of bronchoscopy in diagnosing lung cancer. As histology is the gold standard in diagnosis, there are no false positive results but some studies do include a follow up to support their outcomes. We divided the outcomes into those reporting for central masses (endobronchial) and those reporting results for peripheral masses (beyond the segmental bronchi). We also examined the effect of the size of the lesion on the sensitivity of the technique.

Central Disease

The results for central and peripheral lesions are shown in Table 13. Bronchoscopy has a higher sensitivity for central masses as sampling methods are likely to be more accurate when the lesion is visible. The results are broken down by sampling method. The systematic review53 reported the results from 3754 patients and found that endobronchial biopsy provided the best sensitivity (74%, 20 studies), followed by brushings (53%, 18 studies) and washings (48%, 12 studies). (Level II) The study by Hashmi et al54 also found a high sensitivity for endobronchial biopsy (82%, 88 patients). (Level III) The sensitivity for bronchoscopic needle aspiration in the review53 was 56% (8 studies) but there was a high degree of heterogeneity in the methods and the results. The study by Xie et al55 found a sensitivity of 67% for bronchoscopy guided transstrachael and transbronchial biopsy. (Level II) Fourteen studies in the systematic review examined the sensitivity of combining different methods (endobronchial biopsy, brushing, washing and endobronchial/transbronchial needle aspiration) and found it to be 88% for centrally located lesions53.

Peripheral Disease

The systematic review by Schreiber et al56 reported the pooled results of 4136 patients in 30 studies on the sensitivity of flexible bronchoscopy for peripheral lesions beyond the visual segmental bronchi (Table 13). Brushings have the highest sensitivity (52%, 15 studies), followed by transbronchial biopsy (46%, 18 studies) and broncoalveolar lavage/washings (43%, 13 studies). Transbronchial needle aspiration had a pooled sensitivity of 67%, but this was calculated from only five studies and there was a large degree of heterogeneity in the sample sizes. Twelve studies in...
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the systematic review\textsuperscript{26} examined the use of all modalities combined, giving a pooled sensitivity of 69\%, again much lower than the sensitivity for diagnosis of central disease. Eight studies in the systematic review\textsuperscript{26} presented results by size of lesion for peripheral disease. Bronchoscopy (brushings and/or biopsy) of lesions greater than 2 cm in diameter had a pooled sensitivity of 62\%, whereas for lesions smaller than 2 cm in diameter the sensitivity was 33\%. (Level II)

Typical complications figures for bronchoscopy are reported in the British Thoracic Society guidelines for diagnostic flexible bronchoscopy\textsuperscript{41}.

- Mortality Rate in UK: 0.04\%
- Major Complication rate in UK (including respiratory depression, airway obstruction and pneumonia): 0.12\%
- Transbronchial biopsy: pneumothorax 1-5\% cases
- Haemorrhage (usually mild): 9\%

Overall, bronchoscopy provides a reasonably accurate method of determining a diagnosis in patients with central disease and with lesions over 2 cm in diameter. For peripheral disease, the sensitivity is too low to recommend this technique for diagnosis in preference to the other techniques available.

4.5.2.1 Should CT be performed prior to Bronchoscopy?

We investigated whether it was appropriate to perform a CT scan of the thorax prior to bronchoscopy. Despite organisational barriers (such as longer waiting times for scans than for bronchoscopies), a CT scan prior to bronchoscopy could not only provide valuable information regarding the tumour position but could highlight the presence of any metastatic disease. This would allow recommendations for an alternative diagnostic procedure to be made if clinically more appropriate.

There is some evidence to suggest that the additional imaging data significantly increases the likelihood of obtaining a diagnosis at bronchoscopy (Table 14). Only two studies report on the accuracy of bronchoscopy performed with and without information from a CT scan in obtaining a diagnosis. Larroche et al\textsuperscript{42} found that the sensitivity of bronchoscopy performed blind to CT information was 71\% and the sensitivity of bronchoscopy performed with knowledge of CT information was 89\%, a statistically significant difference (p=0.012). (Level III DS). The study by Bungay et al\textsuperscript{58} found that when bronchoscopy was performed before CT the sensitivity was 56\% and when CT was performed before bronchoscopy the sensitivity was 80\%, although this was not a statistically significant difference. (Level III DS). The different results reported by these studies may be a reflection of the differences in the patient populations. The study by Bungay et al\textsuperscript{58} excluded patients with pulmonary collapse and included some patients with peripheral lesions, whereas the study by Larroche et al\textsuperscript{42} included some patients with distal collapse but excluded peripheral lesions.

The study by Larroche\textsuperscript{42} also reported changes in management that resulted from the difference in performing the tests in a different order. Of the patients that had a CT scan first, 7\% required no further investigation as the CT scan was either normal, consistent with benign disease or consistent with widespread metastatic disease, and 18\% had an alternative procedure (e.g. needle biopsy) instead of bronchoscopy due to the CT results (Level I'). However, the reasons for changes in management were not always fully specified.

Overall, the evidence indicates that by performing a CT prior to an intended bronchoscopy, some unnecessary bronchoscopies can be prevented and the accuracy of bronchoscopy is improved.

There is no evidence on the use of CT before other biopsy procedures. However, the Cochrane Collaboration (COC) wished to make a good practice point that CT should also be performed before other biopsy procedures.

4.5.3 Percutaneous Transthoracic Needle Aspiration/Biopsy

Transbronchial needle aspiration or biopsy involves insertion of a small needle percutaneously to remove fluid or tissue from the lung, which is then examined for malignancy. Fluoroscopy, CT or ultrasound can be used to guide the insertion of the needle to the site of disease.

The literature search identified one systematic review\textsuperscript{64} and four other studies of diagnostic accuracy, that were not included in the review\textsuperscript{64} 4.5.2.2. The systematic review excluded studies with less than 50 patients, and we used the same exclusion criteria for our review. The data are reported in Table 15. The pooled sensitivity for 61 studies included in the systematic review was 90\% (95\% CI 88-92)\% and the specificity is 97\% (95\%CI: 96-98)\%. The PPV and the NPV range from 82-100\% and 0-96\% respectively (Level II DS). The four additional studies that we identified found similar results, reporting sensitivities between 95-97\% and specificities between 96-100\%\textsuperscript{65-68} (Level Ia and II DS). The systematic review found two studies that compared the use of cutting needle core biopsy to needle aspiration and found that they had similar sensitivities but that core biopsy had a better specificity\textsuperscript{69} (Level II).

A systematic review of case series reporting mortality and morbidity for a total of 4577 patients found that a chest drain was needed in 10.4\% of patients, haemoptysis occurred in 3.6\% of patients and there was a mortality of 0.04\%\textsuperscript{61}. One additional case series of 506 patients, not included in the review, reported similar results (chest drain in 7.9\% of patients and mortality in 0\%\textsuperscript{62}). Pneumothorax was observed in 31 \% of patients in the systematic review\textsuperscript{61} and 23\% of patients in the additional study\textsuperscript{67} (Level III).

The British Thoracic Society and the Royal College of Radiology have also issued guidelines on radiologically guided lung biopsy, which provide further detail on the indications for the test, complications that may arise and the technique to use\textsuperscript{61} (Level IV).

In summary, the evidence suggests that transbronchial needle aspiration and biopsy have a good sensitivity and specificity for diagnosis of lung cancer. The complication rate is acceptable. For peripheral lung lesions, it provides a more accurate way of diagnosing lung cancer than bronchoscopy.

4.5.4 Biopsies of sites other than the lung

In some cases, for example patients presenting with stage IIIb or IV disease or symptoms that suggest metastases in specific organs (e.g. the liver), or in patients with clinical or radiographic evidence of SCLC, it may be more convenient to take a biopsy from the chest wall, pleural effusion or the site of distant metastasis. The site may be easier to biopsy than the primary tumour and this technique has the advantage of allowing confirmation of the stage of disease at the same time. A search was performed, but no studies were found that provided information on the sensitivity and specificity for suspected lung cancer.

The guideline development group decided to make a good practice point that biopsies should be taken from the site of a metastases where this can be achieved more easily than from the primary site.

4.5.5 Surgical techniques

Surgery plays an important role in the diagnosis and accurate staging of lung cancer. However, a decision to include a surgical procedure in the diagnostic work-up must anticipate associated risks as well as potential benefits. These benefits are closely tied to the likely stage of the disease. This section examines surgical methods of diagnosis. Evidence relating to staging and techniques examining the lymph nodes (e.g. mediastinoscopy) are discussed in the chapter 5 on staging.

4.5.5.1 Anterior Mediastinotomy

Anterior (parasternal) mediastinotomy has developed primarily as a means of staging carcinoma of the lung located in the left upper lobe\textsuperscript{65}. It has also been advocated to establish the diagnosis of primary masses in the anterior mediastinum, especially in the setting of superior vena cava obstruction when needle biopsy may be contraindicated\textsuperscript{70}.

We identified only one study that reported results of diagnostic accuracy for anterior mediastinotomy\textsuperscript{41} (Table 16). The overall sensitivity and specificity of the technique for diagnosing various diseases was 98\% and 65\% respectively for 62 patients with hilar or mediastinal masses. This study reported a morbidity of 16\% and a mortality of 1.6\%. (Level II)
There is very limited evidence on the use of anterior mediastinoscopy in the diagnosis of lung cancer, although the sensitivity appeared high from the one study that evaluated it. Its role is far more clearly defined as a staging technique (see chapter 5 on staging).

4.6.1 Health Economics analysis of FDG-PET in diagnosis

The value of FDG-PET lies in its ability to reduce the number of futile (diagnostic) surgical operations by diagnosing non-cancer cases earlier. This should reduce surgical morbidity and surgical cost. FDG-PET may misdiagnose some cancer cases (i.e. surgical biopsy) and therefore PET negative cases may have to be systematically followed up. FDG-PET scanning is expensive compared with CT scanning but is less costly than surgical biopsy (see Table 21) and therefore in some circumstances PET could in theory reduce health service costs by eliminating episodes of futile surgery.

There are nine cost-effectiveness analyses (one from Germany39, two from Japan40,41, four from the USA42-46 and two from Australia47,48) that have evaluated the use of FDG-PET scanning in solitary pulmonary nodules. In addition, three more studies estimated incremental cost but not effectiveness. All cost analysis resulted in cost savings per patients examined by FDG-PET for investigation of SPNs48,49 (see Table 20).

The cost-effectiveness studies used a variety of comparator strategies including ‘watch and wait’, CT alone, transthoracic needle biopsy and thoracotomy. Gambhir et al42, evaluated thoracic FDG-PET after indeterminate/positive CT, with wait and watch after negative CT or negative PET. They looked at five scenarios for example, 64-year-old, 1.5 pack per day smoker (prevalence=0.83). For this group, CT scanning had a lower cost and longer life expectancy compared with the PET strategy. Generally, they found that the optimal strategy depends on the underlying prevalence (P) of cancer as follows:

- $0.12<$P<0.69: CT→FDG-PET→Transthoracic needle biopsy/surgery is optimal
- P0.69:$P0.90: CT→Transthoracic needle biopsy/surgery is optimal
- P>$0.90: Transthoracic needle biopsy/surgery is optimal

Keith et al49 adapted this model and concluded that PET after indeterminate CT would dominate CT for their hospital population in Australia.

Dietlein et al50 found that whole-body PET scanning dominates both transthoracic needle biopsy and surgery. Compared with watch and wait it costs around £2,000 per life year gained (LY gained). Kasuda et al51 looked at CT and chest-PET for all SPNs versus CT alone. They found that chest-PET added around £1,100 per life year gained. They use a rather low unit cost for a PET scan of £700. Kasuda et al52 examined full-body PET and CT vs CT alone and conversely showed a cost-saving of around £1,000 but a drop in life-expectancy of 0.01 years. Shepherd53 estimated that PET after indeterminate CT would cost approximately £7,000 per LY gained compared with watch and wait, however, extra caution should be applied to this study, since it has not subsequently been published as a full report.

The decision analysis of Gould et al54 on cost effectiveness for five diagnostic strategies (computed tomography, FDG-PET, transthoracic needle biopsy, surgery and watchful waiting) showed the choice of strategy depended on the pre-test probability of malignancy and to a lesser extent the risk for surgical complications. The use of FDG-PET was most cost-effective when pre-test probability and CT results were conflicting. In addition, use of FDG-PET was also cost-effective in patients with intermediate pre-test probability (55%) who are at high risk for surgical complications.

Camber et al55 evaluated whether the cost-effectiveness of FDG-PET could be improved by using it with quantitative contrast-enhanced computed tomography (QECT). The baseline results (55% prevalence of malignancy) showed that QECT with FDG-PET strategy was the most cost effective strategy (AUS$12,059/patient-£5,111/patient) followed by the FDG-PET strategy (AUS$12,300/patient-£5,212/patient) for the evaluation of solitary pulmonary nodules.

The published evidence from overseas seems to show that for some patient subgroups PET scanning after CT is cost-effective. The cost-effectiveness depends on the prevalence of cancer among the patient group. If the prevalence of cancer in the patient group is high, then PET is both more costly and less effective than going straight to surgery. If the prevalence of cancer is very low then PET is more effective then watchful waiting but unlikely to be cost-effective. If the prevalence of cancer is slightly higher, then PET could be cost-effective. The studies differed in terms of where the cut-offs should be, for example, the upper prevalence cut-off beyond which PET is not cost-effective varied between 0.8 and 0.9 between studies.

None of the published studies evaluated the use of PET scanning within the NHS in the UK. They all showed that cost-effectiveness is dependent on the prevalence of cancer in the patient group, which can vary between settings. Cost-effectiveness will also depend on the precise sensitivity and specificity and on the exact pathway to be followed subsequent to scanning; these factors also vary between health systems. This includes patients with a strong suspicion of lung cancer and where surgical biopsy has failed or is not possible.

This section has only considered the cost-effectiveness of PET with regard to diagnosing lung cancer, evidence for the cost-effectiveness of PET in the staging of NSCLC is appraised in the following chapter.

4.6.2 Health Economics analysis of Sputum Cytology

Only one economic evaluation explicitly explored the role of sputum analysis in the diagnosis of lung cancer. Raab et al56 conducted 9 decision analyses that compared the use of sputum analysis as the first procedure with no sputum analysis, in a US context. The analyses differed according to whether the lesion was central or peripheral and to the sequence of the other diagnostic tests. For example, one analysis for peripheral lesions compared the sequence in the order of the tests undertaken:

- Sputum analysis → Fine needle aspiration (FNA) → thoracotomy

Compared with:

- FNA → thoracotomy

For all but one of the analyses the sputum analysis arm dominated its comparator (i.e. with a lower cost and a slightly increased life expectancy). This was
because some surgical procedures were avoided through the use of sputum analysis. The main sensitivity analysis concerned the prevalence of lung cancer in the patient group. Essentially they found that sputum analysis dominates in patient groups with a prevalence of cancer greater than 0.5.

4.6.3 Health Economics Analysis of Bronchoscopy

There was a single eligible study examining the cost-effectiveness of bronchoscopy. The US study by Govert et al. compared the following strategies using decision analysis:

> Flexible bronchoscopy alone
> Flexible bronchoscopy with washings or brushings
> Flexible bronchoscopy with washings and brushings.

They ascribed seven days of additional morbidity to a complication arising from a surgical lung biopsy, with a complication rate 0.03, a cost of this complication of $20,000 and a cost of cytology of $177. On this basis, and using retrospective diagnostic data they estimated that the addition of washings or brushings cost an additional $308 per reduced quality day avoided. The addition of washings and brushings cost an additional $5,500 per reduced quality day avoided. They concluded that the cytology of either washings or brushings was cost-effective but not both. By usual conventions (i.e. a threshold of $50,000 per QALY gained), even this seems to be poor value for money. However, given that the cost of cytology in the USA is substantially higher than in the UK, it is still likely that either washings or brushings (as an adjunct to forceps biopsy) is cost-effective in the NHS compared with a £30,000 per QALY threshold.

4.6.4 Health Economics analysis of performing CT prior to Bronchoscopy

Chest CT is widely considered an essential diagnostic procedure for most patients with suspected lung cancer, hence only one relevant economic evaluation was found. Laroche et al. conducted a randomised controlled trial (n=171) in the UK to compare the consequences of CT versus flexible bronchoscopy as the first investigation for patients with suspected lung cancer. They found that CT first has the following advantages:

> Avoids some invasive investigations - 19% avoid bronchoscopy (12% FNA and 7% no invasive investigation)
> Improves accuracy of first invasive investigation – (90% vs. 71% of malignancies were detected with the first invasive investigation). Hence, overall 11% avoided having a second invasive procedure (19% vs. 8%).
> Reduces length of hospital stay (data not presented).

The trial was not powered to detect differences in the number of surgical complications. In theory, one would expect fewer complications in the CT arm but this is partially offset by the higher incidence of pneumothorax for thoracic needle biopsy compared with bronchoscopy.

The trial was not able to determine whether overall health service costs were reduced or increased because it was not known how many CT scans would normally take place after bronchoscopy. However, based on other costs the authors estimated that if CT scanning after bronchoscopy is normally 60% or more, routine CT scanning would reduce costs (otherwise it would increase costs).

The study was an RCT but there is a potential for selection bias, as the inclusion/exclusion criteria are unclear. The authors note that they attempted to exclude patients with an obvious peripheral mass amenable to percutaneous needle biopsy. One factor that diluted the outcomes measured is that all patients in the trial underwent CT and even in the bronchoscopy arm, subsequent intervention was based not only on the results of the bronchoscopy but also on the results of the CT scan.

In summary, the consequences of routine CT scanning for suspected lung cancer are:

> Chest CT as the initial investigation (after CXR) for patients with suspicion of lung cancer can reduce the number of invasive investigations (by an estimated 17%).
> It could potentially reduce NHS costs if the current CT rate (after bronchoscopy) is greater than approximately 60%.
> If the current CT rate is below 60% then it could still be cost-effective, if there are associated improvements in patient outcomes. There is no evidence for this at present.
> The incremental cost-effectiveness of CT prior bronchoscopy could vary considerably across the NHS because it is determined by usual CT scanning practice.

4.6.5 Health Economics analysis of Surgical Biopsy

One paper was identified that considered the cost of different surgical diagnostic strategies. Osada et al. were concerned with patients who had suspected malignancy in CT but were undiagnosed after bronchoscopy. They were attempting to determine whether thoracotomy alone without needle or surgical thoracoscopy biopsy based solely on chest CT scan was feasible. They found that for this group, 93% (38/41) of these patients went on to thoracotomy after surgical thoracoscopy biopsy and therefore costs could be reduced by going straight to thoracotomy. They added that even in the three patients who did not show appropriate indicators for thoracotomy in their surgical thoracoscopy biopsy would have benefited from going straight to thoracotomy because they required wedge resection to be declared cancer-free.

4.6.6 Summary of Health Economics Findings

Sputum cytology as the first diagnostic investigation could potentially improve patient outcomes and reduce costs.

Routine chest CT before bronchoscopy can reduce the number of invasive procedures. It is likely to reduce surgical morbidity and could reduce health service costs if the pre-test prevalence is relatively high (> about 60%).

In patients with a suggestion of malignancy on CT but no diagnosis after bronchoscopy, surgical thoracoscopy biopsy to eliminate unnecessary thoracotomies is unlikely to be cost-effective compared with going straight to thoracotomy.

Diagnostic PET scanning could potentially both reduce costs and improve patient outcomes for some patients with SPNs. Further research is required to establish cost effectiveness in a UK setting.

We should be cautious in interpreting the results of studies in this review because:

All the studies except one were non-UK studies. There are a number of problems associated with using overseas studies. Estimates of effectiveness may be inappropriate because of differences in the population. The cost of resources used can vary considerably between countries, for example, the cost of clinical staff is lower in the UK than in some countries. The resources used in the subsequent treatment will vary between countries according to local protocols. This may also impact on the estimated health gain for patients diagnosed.

Studies varied in their assumptions. For example for surgical complications Govert et al. (1996) estimated only the morbidity whereas, Raab et al. (1997) estimated reduction in life expectancy. Furthermore, all the studies compared often quite complicated pathways. Patient selection would also have affected the cost-effectiveness.
One study has evaluated the importance of patient preferences for diagnostic strategy. Raab et al. incorporated into their analysis the quality of life of patients. They concluded that overall patient outcome could be substantially affected by an individual patient's anxiety. They considered two types of patients with the same risk of cancer. For a patient who is averse to surgical risk, watchful waiting gave the best overall quality of life and was the most cost-effective strategy. In contrast, for the patient who is less risk averse but averse to waiting, going straight to surgery could be the most cost-effective strategy.

4.7 Recommendations

4.7.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations

Where a chest X-ray has been requested in primary or secondary care and is incidentally suggestive of lung cancer, a second copy of the radiologist's report should be sent to a designated member of the lung cancer MDT, usually the chest physician. The MDT should have a mechanism in place to follow up these reports to enable the patient's GP to have a management plan in place. (DiGPPI)

Patients with known or suspected lung cancer should be offered a contrast-enhanced chest CT scan to further the diagnosis and stage the disease. The scan should also include the liver and adrenals. (DiGPPI)

Chest CT should be performed before:
- an intended fiberoptic bronchoscopy (A; CDS5)
- any other biopsy procedure. (DiGPPI)

Bronchoscopy should be performed on patients with central lesions who are able and willing to undergo the procedure. (B;D(S))

Sputum cytology is rarely indicated and should be reserved for the investigation of patients who have centrally placed nodules or masses and are unable to tolerate, or unwilling to undergo, bronchoscopy or other invasive tests. (B;D(S))

Percutaneous transbronchial needle biopsy is recommended for diagnosis of lung cancer in patients with peripheral lesions. (B(DS))

Surgical biopsy should be performed for diagnosis where other less invasive methods of biopsy have not been successful or are not possible. (B(DS))

Where there is evidence of distant metastases, biopsies should be taken from the metastatic site if this can be achieved more easily than from the primary site. (B(DS))

An 18F-deoxyglucose positron emission tomography (FDG-PET) scan should be performed to investigate solitary pulmonary nodules in cases where a biopsy is not possible or has failed, depending on nodule size, position and CT characterisation. (C; B(DS))

5 Staging of Lung Cancer

5.1 Introduction

Once a diagnosis of Lung Cancer has been made it is essential that the stage of the disease is ascertained to enable decisions to be made about the future management of the patient.

Patients should have had established, where possible, a histological diagnosis of the cell type of the lung cancer. Clinical examination is likely to give some indication of the stage of the disease but normally further tests are necessary to determine the exact stage.

Treatment is dependent on histology and on the size and location of the primary tumour, the presence and location of involved lymph nodes and the occurrence of distant metastases. A number of other prognostic factors may also influence the choice of treatment. These include performance status, comorbidity, age, gender and biochemistry. Information on the stage of the disease will be used in addition to these factors to determine patient management.

A variety of investigations can be used to establish the stage of the disease and in practice staging is often carried out alongside diagnosis.

5.2 Techniques included in this Review

Non-invasive methods used to stage lung cancer included in this review are Computerised Tomography (CT), Positron Emission Tomography (PET) (excluding gamma camera PET) and more recently PET-CT, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Bone Scintigraphy (BS) and Ultrasound (US). Invasive staging techniques evaluated include mediastinoscopy, thoracoscopy, Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS), Endoscopic Ultrasound guided Fine Needle Aspiration (EUS-FNA) and percutaneous Tram-Thoracic Needle Aspiration biopsy.

5.3 Methodology

Guidelines produced by the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) on the staging of lung cancer were retrieved and found to be relevant for this review, in addition to a Health Technology Board for Scotland (HTBS) report. New systematic reviews were undertaken on all of the techniques listed above.

The full search strategy can be found in appendix six.

5.4 Staging Classifications

5.4.1 Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC)

The basis of staging in lung cancer is the relationship between the anatomical extent of the tumour at diagnosis and survival outcome. In 1973 the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) proposed a scheme for lung cancer based on this TNM system. The system was revised in 1986 and most recently in 1997 being published on behalf of the AJCC and the Union Internationale Contre le Cancer (UICC). In the TNM classification system for NSCLC (appendix two, figures one and two), the T-factor represents the extent of the primary tumour, the N-factor denotes the extent of regional lymph node involvement, and the M-factor corresponds to the presence of extra-thoracic metastasis.

5.4.2 Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC)

The simple staging system introduced by the Veterans Administration Lung Cancer Study Group (VALG) of "limited" and "extensive" disease is generally applied in clinical practice and has proven adequate for most clinical situations (appendix two, figure three). In addition the revised TNM system has limited use in SCLC, except in those patients undergoing surgical resection.
5.5 T-Stage Assessment

Despite many prognostic factors, stage at presentation has significant bearing on the lung cancer patient’s eventual outcome. The T-stage involves predominantly intra-thoracic assessment of the primary tumour in terms of size, location and relationship to surrounding structures.

Accurate discrimination between T1 and T2 has limited clinical relevance, as it does not significantly affect the choice of treatment. However, differentiation between T2 and T3 disease, and T3 and T4 involvement will have important prognostic and therapeutic implications.

CT remains the mainstay of radiological clinical staging though MRI has been advocated as an alternative. In assessing the current role of CT and MRI in the T-staging of lung cancer appropriate studies were systematically reviewed with consideration to the reliability of differentiating T2 and T3, and T3/T4 status, reflecting the presence of invasion of mediastinal and chest wall structures which has significant implications on whether or not the tumour is resectable. Study inclusion was based on patients with histologically proven NSCLC without distant metastases who were being assessed for surgery. All studies evaluated CT in assessing T-stage either alone or against another modality (usually MRI). Pathological staging following surgical resection was the usual comparison.

An alternative to radiological staging is surgical staging with video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS) used specifically to assess pleural and chest wall involvement. Few studies have been published in this area.

5.5.1 Computerised Tomography (CT) in T-Staging

A recent systematic review of 15 studies evaluating the reliability of CT in predicting T2/T3 and T3/T4 status divided studies according to whether the CT study assessed for chest wall invasion, or mediastinal involvement or both[4] (see Table 22). Within these groups, studies showed similarity in patient groups, location of tumour, radiological criteria for assessment and outcome measures. The overall reliability of CT in predicting T3 or T4 disease is quite poor with a sensitivity 55%, specificity 89%, NPV 82% and PPV 68% (Level II DS) with significant variability (range 38-100%).

In considering whether there is specifically local chest wall invasion the reliability of CT was similar with a sensitivity 64%, specificity 74%, NPV 91% and PPV 56%. For central T3/4 tumours, reliability of CT in assessing whether there is mediastinal involvement was limited with a sensitivity of 76%, specificity 80%, NPV 86% and PPV 67% (Level II DS).

The False Positive (FP) rate (1 - PPV) is probably the most important factor in determining whether or not to consider surgical resection. It was relatively high for both central and peripheral tumour groups (FP rate of 23% and 44% respectively) and therefore CT does not appear to be reliable in assessing chest wall or mediastinal tumour involvement unless overt evidence of invasion is demonstrated, such as bone destruction or vascular invasion (Level II DS).

In conclusion, to stage the extent of the primary tumour a chest CT should be performed for patients with lung cancer, although CT alone should not be relied upon to assess chest wall and mediastinum invasion. A recommendation to support this is in the diagnosis chapter.

5.5.2 Magnetic Resonance Imaging in T-Staging

Our search retrieved one paper examining the reliability of MRI in assessing T-status, (Table 23). This study (N=179) showed no significant difference between the two modalities (CT and MRI) in detecting chest wall involvement (P=0.77)[5]. However, MRI was marginally more accurate than CT in diagnosing mediastinal invasion (Level III DS) (P=0.047)[5]. For MRI the overall sensitivity was 56%, specificity 80%, PPV 24% and NPV 22%, the prevalence was 29%. The systematic review assessing the reliability of MRI in predicting T3 or T4 status showed no significant advantages over CT[6] (Level II DS).

Overall, in regard to MRI and T3/T4 assessment, from the few studies in this area there appears to be no general advantage over CT scanning. However, there may be specific circumstances whereby MRI scanning may provide additional information over and above CT, although care should be exercised in interpreting these studies as they were performed prior to the advent of spiral and multislice CT (see 5.5.5).

5.5.3 Thoracoscopy in T-Staging

With the development of Video-Assisted Thoracoscopic Surgery (VATS), staging thoracoscopy may allow assessment of visceral pleural involvement by tumour and provide information on T-status beyond standard assessment.

Much of the literature on VATS has dealt with its role in the diagnosis and management of the solitary pulmonary nodule (see chapter 4 Diagnosis). Several small retrospective series have examined the role of VATS prior to formal thoracotomy in looking for pleural and chest wall involvement (T-status) with or without N-stage assessment (see section 5.6). VATS was found to be a safe procedure (see chapter 6 Surgery) but because of significant heterogeneity in patient selection, methodology described and comparisons used these papers were discarded.

Unfortunately no conclusions can be made regarding the effectiveness of VATS in detecting radiologically occult chest wall disease owing to the limited trial data available. Further research in the use of VATS as a staging tool is required.

5.5.4 Future Considerations for T-Staging

Recent technical improvement in CT imaging with helical and multi-detector CT leading to faster scanning times whilst using thin sections leading to and reduced motion/ respiratory artefacts, together with vascular enhancement techniques, are likely to improve current delineation of tumour invasion. Multiplanar reconstruction methods with somatic vessels in multislice CT are likely to provide improved diagnostic information over conventional imaging. Clinical evaluation is awaited.

5.5.5 Pancoast tumours

Pancoast tumours arise in the apex of the chest, often invading the lower portion of the brachial plexus, the upper thoracic ribs and vertebral bodies, the stellate ganglion and the sub-clavian vessels. There is little data on the staging of Pancoast tumours. One paper was retrieved. Heelan et al[12] measured the diagnostic accuracy of MRI and CT in the T-staging of Pancoast tumours (Table 25) and reported that MRI provided better detail of tumour involvement around the brachial plexus and vertebral bodies.

5.5.6 Pleural Effusion

Malignant pleural effusions are classed as T4 disease in the NSCLC staging classification system. It is important to determine the extent of the effusion so that the appropriate treatment strategy can be determined. The British Thoracic Society (BTS) have developed guidelines based on a systematic review of the literature[13] and these should be referred to in the management of patients with (suspicious) malignant pleural effusions.

5.6 N-Stage Assessment

The most important aspect of intra-thoracic staging is the determination of nodal (N) involvement. N-staging not only establishes the treatment that the patient will be offered (perhaps most importantly, if they are eligible for curative surgery) but in addition, the prognosis of the patient. This review is concerned with the accuracy of staging N2 and N3 disease. In current clinical practice, apart from a sub-section of patients with N2 disease, patients with mediastinal disease are not eligible for curative surgery.

CT and MRI scans, which represent conventional imaging technologies for staging the mediastinum, rely on an anatomic assessment of the area, specifically, the size of the lymph node to predict malignancy. While the cut-off size for lymph node malignancy can vary from study to study, there is a general consensus within the literature that 1cm on the short axis is the threshold used to differentiate non-malignant nodes from enlarged, malignant nodes[14]. There has been recent interest in Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans for staging the mediastinum. PET scans permit a metabolic assessment of the region under suspicion by relying on tumour cells metabolising an injected radioactive tracer faster than non-malignant cells. The scanner is able to detect such areas of high metabolic activity. This review is restricted to the use of 18F-deoxyglucose positron emission tomography (FDG-PET).
5.6.1 Computerised Tomography in N-Staging

We retrieved a recent systematic review that evaluated the diagnostic accuracy of CT for staging the mediastinum. This was updated with our own search, which located three new trials (Table 24). Pooled sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV figures from the review were 57% (95% CI 49-66%), 82% (95% CI 77-86%), 56% (range 26-84%) and 83% (range 63-93%) respectively (Level III DS), although there was marked heterogeneity between the individual reported figures. The additionally retrieved studies ranged from 37-60% sensitivity, 73-91% specificity, 51-85% PPV and 56-81 NPV (Level Ib and II DS).

In conclusion, CT enables the detection of enlarged mediastinal nodes, but the poor specificity makes tissue sampling necessary to determine the patients true nodal status if surgery is a therapeutic option (Level Ib, II and III DS). A recommendation to support this is in the diagnosis chapter.

5.6.2 FDG-PET in N-Staging

A recent systematic review on mediastinal staging using FDG-PET was retrieved and updated. We retrieved three additional studies that met the inclusion criteria (see Table 26). Pooled weighted averages calculated from the review reported sensitivity and specificity as 84% (CI 0.78-0.89) and 89% (CI 0.83-0.93) respectively and PPV and NPV as 79% (range 0.4-1.0) and 93% (range 0.75-1) respectively (Level II DS). The additional studies reported sensitivities and specificities in the range of 61-68% and 72-84% and PPV and NPVs in the range of 56-88% and 64-87% (Level II DS). The sensitivity and specificity of FDG PET is therefore better than CT.

In conclusion, FDG-PET allows a reasonably accurate determination of mediastinal disease. It is reasonable not to proceed with tissue sampling in the presence of a negative study of the mediastinum, but a positive study may require tissue sampling because there are false positive results associated with infection and inflammation (Level II DS).

5.6.3 Combined use of CT prior to FDG-PET in N-Staging

There has been recent interest in combining the results of CT and PET to increase diagnostic accuracy in mediastinal staging. By using the results of a CT scan prior to that of PET scans, it is possible to assess both the anatomical and metabolic features of the nodes.

A recent Health Technology Board for Scotland (HTBS) represents the most appropriate and up-to-date systematic review of potential candidates for surgery. The NCC-AC review team undertook a search to update this review of 17 observation trials and retrieved one additional paper that has been incorporated into the results (Table 27).

Appendix three, Figure 1 shows the diagnostic accuracy of combined use of CT and FDG-PET of all retrieved studies, which is divided into those patients who were designated CT negative at initial CT and those deemed CT positive for lymph nodes. We calculated the pooled weighted specificity and read off the sensitivity from the summary receiver operating characteristic (sROC) curve. While sensitivity for diagnosing mediastinal disease is high in both groups of patients, 90% and 94% for CT negative and CT positive groups, respectively, the specificity of CT positive patients was much lower (71%) than CT negative patients (93%). This was also reflected in the PPV and NPV of the groups being 57% and 96% respectively, for patients who were CT negative for lymph nodes and 76% and 92% respectively, for patients with a positive CT for mediastinal lymph nodes. Thus, the high false positive rate in CT positive patients means that a positive PET result cannot be relied upon for accuracy (Level Ib and II DS).

There were several methodological weaknesses in the studies included in this analysis. The majority of studies were not controlled trials and tended to focus on diagnostic accuracy rather than patient outcomes such as surgery rates, survival or quality of life. Despite this however, the consistency of results reported from the studies suggest they are reliable. Therefore there is evidence to support the use of FDG-PET for potential candidates for surgery who are negative for mediastinal disease on CT (Level II DS).

5.6.4 Endoscopic Ultrasound (EUS) in N-Staging

EUS provides high-resolution images that can be used for the detection of accessible mediastinal lymph nodes, which are commonly located in the posterior mediastinum. Studies used a combination of shape irregularity and echo heterogeneity to establish the presence of malignancy.

The NCC-AC retrieved a systematic review which incorporated five studies that assessed the use of EUS to stage the mediastinum. We retrieved one additional paper which met our inclusion criteria. Both are shown in Table 28.

The pooled weighted sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV for this modality from the systematic review was 78% (95% CI 61-89), 71% (95% CI 56-82), 75% (range 38-100) and 79% (range 25-76%), respectively (Level II DS). The additional study retrieved reported 70% (95% CI 50-85.3), 81% (95% CI 68-89.6), 64% and 85%, respectively (Level II DS). EUS alone has a better specificity than CT for those nodes that can be visualised.

In conclusion, EUS allows a reasonable evaluation of accessible mediastinal lymph nodes (Level Ib and II DS).

5.6.5 Endoscopic Ultrasound Guided Fine Needle Aspiration (EUS-FNA) in N-Staging

EUS-FNA is commonly performed by endoscopy under conscious sedation. As a tissue sample is taken during the procedure, the technique can act as its own gold standard to verify the presence of malignant disease. A systematic review of five studies, which had little variation in performance characteristics, was updated with one additional paper (Table 29). The sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV of the review was 88% (95% CI, 82-93), 91% (95% CI 77-97), 98% (range 96-100%) and 77% (range 68-100%) respectively (Level II DS) compared to 63%, 100%, 100% and 68% in the additional study (Level II DS). EUS-FNA allows a reasonably accurate assessment of accessible mediastinal lymph nodes (Level II DS).

These results however, come from studies of patients commonly with radiographic evidence of mediastinal lymphadenopathy accessible by a biopsy needle. The results reported should be interpreted in light of the fact that the high sensitivity may be due to an unusually small number of false negatives.

5.6.6 Transbronchial Needle Aspiration (TBNA) in N-Staging

TBNA, or the Wang technique as it is also known, removes aspirate material or paratracheal or subcarinal lymph nodes using a flexible bronchoscope. This has a good specificity but is not sensitive (Table 30).

Twelve studies were retrieved in a recent systematic review and no additional studies were found (see Table 30). A total of 910 patients were included, 99.7% of whom had lung cancer. The overall sensitivity and specificity was reported as 76% (95% CI 72-79) and 96% (95% CI 91-100). The prevalence varied among the studies, from between 30 and 88% which may be responsible for the large range of NPVs. The average weighted NPV and PPV was 71% (range 36-100%) and 100%, respectively. TBNA has a better sensitivity and specificity than EUS-FNA which has 88% sensitivity and 91% specificity (Table 29). In conclusion, TBNA allows an accurate assessment of accessible mediastinal nodes (Level II DS).

5.6.7 Image Guided Transthoracic Needle Aspiration (TTNA) in N-Staging

A variety of approach can be utilised to perform TTNA which may involve traversing lung parenchyma to obtain histological proof of malignancy. It is most commonly used to confirm metastasis for involvement in patients who are not surgical candidates as it is limited by an inability to sample multiple node stations. Our search retrieved a systematic review of five studies to which no additional studies were added (Table 31).

A total of 215 evaluable people were included, 96% of whom were confirmed to have lung cancer. The overall sensitivity and specificity were 91% (95% CI 74-97%) and 100%. The PPV again was inversely correlated with the prevalence, the pooled weighted average being 85% (range 65-91%) (Level III DS). TTNA allows an assessment of mediastinal nodes (Level III DS).
5.6.8 Mediastinoscopy in N-Staging

Cervical mediastinoscopy gives access to the pretracheal and para-tracheal lymph nodes, as well as lymph nodes between the left and right main bronchus. Alternatively, an anterior mediastinoscopy via the second or third intercostal space on the left side allows exploration of the aorto-pulmonary window, particularly in patients with tumours of the left lung. A modified technique, an extended cervical mediastinoscopy has been described for assessing the same region. In addition, video-assisted techniques in combination with standard cervical or extended mediastinoscopy have also been described in small series.

Previous guideline recommendations concerning mediastinoscopy have reinforced the belief that it is the “gold standard” among staging tests of mediastinal lymph nodes. It is performed under a general anaesthetic, either as a day-case or short stay procedure, with low rates of morbidity and mortality (see chapter 4 on Diagnosis).

Study inclusion for our review was based on patients with histologically proven NSCLC without distant metastases who were being assessed for surgery. All studies evaluated mediastinoscopy in assessing N2/3 disease either alone or against another modality (usually CT).

The most recent systematic review of mediastinal staging by standard cervical mediastinoscopy included 14 studies (N=5867) (Table 32). The overall sensitivity was 81% (95% CI 0.76-0.85). The overall NPV was 91% (range, 58-97%) with a prevalence of 37% (range, 21-54%). This gives an average false negative (FN) rate of approximately 10%. However, in at least four of the studies reviewed, the FN rate was affected by detection of positive nodes at surgery that were inaccessible by conventional mediastinoscopy. In addition, the FN rate is likely to be affected by the diligence with which nodes are sampled at mediastinoscopy.

The specificity and PPV for mediastinoscopy were both reported to be 100%. These values cannot be assessed as patients with positive lymph nodes were not subject to any further procedures. However, several commentaries have suggested that the FP rate is likely to be low.

In conclusion, it is often difficult to compare invasive staging methods as the patients having one test may differ from patients having another. However, standard cervical mediastinoscopy appears to have reasonable sensitivity, a high NPV, and the ability to assess directly the clinically relevant nodal stations.

5.6.9 Anterior Mediastinotomy and Extended Cervical Mediastinoscopy

In the context of left upper lobe tumours, limited information is available on the two additional methods that allow access to the aorto-pulmonary window (but not other stations particularly), anterior mediastinoscopy and extended cervical mediastinoscopy. The American College of Chest Physicians’ (ACCP) systematic review102 evaluated two small observational studies (N=206) (Table 32 and Table 34) and noted that both methods had low sensitivity (for anterior mediastinoscopy 63% and 83%, and extended mediastinoscopy, 45% and 51%) compared with other invasive tests. But as an adjunct to standard mediastinoscopy there was improved sensitivity (for anterior mediastinoscopy 87% in both studies, and extended mediastinoscopy 82% and 89%) and NPV (for anterior mediastinoscopy 89% and 92%, and extended mediastinoscopy 82% and 89%) in patients with left upper lobe tumours.

5.6.10 Thoracoscopy in N-Staging

Staging thoracoscopy or VATS provides access to nodal stations that are not accessible by standard mediastinoscopy, such as the aorto-pulmonary window. In addition, it may allow assessment of visceral pleural involvement by tumour and provide information on T-status beyond standard assessment.

Several observational papers examined the role of VATS prior to formal thoracotomy in assessing mediastinal lymph node stations that are generally inaccessible to standard cervical mediastinoscopy. Patient selection, lymph node station selection and comparison groups were variable and so no studies passed our quality assessment criteria. Therefore, no conclusions can be made regarding its role and further research is needed.

5.6.11 Future Considerations

There has been recent interest in improving assessment on CT by including morphological features of the nodes i.e contour and heterogeneity.

The current wave of FDG-PET scanners are integrated PET-CT scanners and it is likely that the diagnostic accuracy of these machines will better than the estimates from the published literature.

There has been interest in recent years in the detection and diagnosis of non-palpable supraventricular lymph nodes using CT and US, with promising results.

5.7 M-Stage Assessment

Distant metastases are present in most SCLC patients and around 40% of NSCLC patients at presentation. The presence of distant metastases leads to a classification of stage IV disease and these patients are no longer candidates for radical therapy. It is therefore important that metastases are identified prior to treatment planning to minimise the number of futile radical therapies.

Approximately 90% of NSCLC and SCLC patients with distant metastases have symptoms indicative of these sites. In many ways this makes M-staging straightforward although no test is 100% accurate and patients without symptoms may still have occult metastases. The clinician therefore faces a number of decisions for the most efficient way to carry out M-stage assessment.

5.7.1 Clinical Evaluation

The clinical evaluation is an essential part of the M-stage assessment. Not only will clinical investigations indicate the presence of distant metastases but will also direct further investigative tests.

Clinical examination consists of a history and physical examination to include routine haematological and biochemical blood tests and a CXR. As common practice many patients will also have had a CT scan of the chest and liver for diagnostic purposes. The clinical signs that suggest the presence of distant metastases are shown below.

5.7.2 Clinical Evaluation to Detect Specific Sites of Metastasis

5.7.2.1 Brain

A recent review was retrieved by our search that comprised 17 studies which compared the ability of the clinical examination against CT, MRI or PET (reference standard) to detect brain metastases. Our update search retrieved no additional papers (Table 35). Nine studies within the review included patients with a negative clinical evaluation while the remainder included patients with both positive and negative evaluations. For both groups of patients the pooled sensitivity was 76% (95% CI 64-84), the specificity 87% (95% CI 74-94), PPV 54% (range 21-100%) and NPV (range 70-100%). Cerebral metastases are more likely in patients with adenocarcinomas, N2 disease or large primary tumours and therefore careful clinical examination for cerebral metastases in this group should be undertaken.

In conclusion, clinical evaluation detects around 76% of patients with brain metastases (level III DS).

5.7.2.2 Bone

A recent review was retrieved by our search which comprised 17 studies that had each compared clinical examination against radionuclide bone
5.7.3 Liver and Adrenal

Our search retrieved a recent review which comprised 12 studies that compared the ability of the clinical examination against CT (reference standard) to detect both liver and adrenal metastases. Our update search retrieved no additional papers (Table 36).

In conclusion, while the sensitivity and NPV of the clinical examination is high for the detection of abdominal metastasis (92% and 95% respectively), the specificity and PPV is low (49% and 32% respectively) (Level III DS).

5.7.4 Imaging of Specific Sites of Metastasis

Studies that report on imaging modalities for detecting distant metastases vary widely in quality and results. The type of reference standard used (which may be a repeat scan, alternative scan, follow-up, histology or a combination of this list) and the heterogeneity in patient populations both contribute to the variety in results for each test. Papers with reference standards other than at least a follow-up of 6 months or histology were excluded. It should also be noted that, in the majority of instances, the literature fails to report either the results broken down by stage (clinical or pathological) or to compare the results of those patients with symptoms against those without. More research is needed in this area.

5.7.4.1 Brain

The brain is one of the most common sites of metastasis for lung cancer patients; the incidence of brain metastasis in necropsy studies vary from 30%-50%. While screening for cranial metastasis has been investigated, the low pick up rate of positive scan without neurological signs and symptoms and the high cost of scanning all patients, means it is not thought to be either clinically or financially worthwhile. This section will review the evidence of CT and FDG-PET to accurately diagnose cranial metastasis.

One paper was retrieved that measured the ability of CT to detect disease in potentially operable patients free from sign and symptom of cranial metastasis (Table 40). An additional paper reports the accuracy of FDG-PET (Table 41) and MRI plus CT in newly diagnosed NSCLC patients (Table 42). The diagnostic accuracy of CT plus MRI was the most accurate imaging modality for the detection of distant metastasis (sensitivity: 100%, specificity: 100%, PPV: 100% and NPV: 100%), followed by FDG PET and finally CT (Grade III DS). Although these results are encouraging, the heterogeneity of the patients both across and within each study and the small number of patients within each study make it difficult to reach any firm conclusions. MRI is believed to be the most sensitive technique to demonstrate metastases in the brain and would be the modality of choice, followed by CT if the patient cannot tolerate the MRI scanner.

5.7.4.2 Liver

Due to its anatomical location, the liver is now routinely imaged in combination with the patient's initial chest CT in the initial staging protocol. Despite having relatively low incidence (in clinically staged I-II patients, liver metastasis occur in approximately 2% of patients), metastatic imaging at such an early stage in the pathway can immediately identify those not going on to a radical treatment. Perhaps because of this low incidence there are comparatively few studies with adequate reference standards which evaluate CT, FDG-PET and ultrasound for the detection of liver metastasis.

Three papers, with a total of 312 patients, reported results on the ability of CT to detect malignancy in the liver (Table 43). The pooled weighted results from these studies were a sensitivity 97% and specificity of 94% (Grade III DS). One paper, with 78 patients, reviewed the ability of PET to detect liver metastasis (Table 44). It reported a sensitivity of 100% and a specificity of 100% (Grade III DS). These results were compared to that of one paper with 77 patients which reported results of ultrasound106; sensitivity 92% and specificity 96% (Table 45) (Grade II DS). Although the results from these studies appear encouraging, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from this small number of heterogeneous participants. There is not sufficient evidence to depart from the current practice of routinely scanning the liver during the initial staging CT.

5.7.4.3 Adrenals

Many of the issues surrounding the detection of adrenal metastases are associated with distinguishing metastatic disease from adenomas, which are also common in lung cancer patients. The incidence of abnormal and subsequently malignant adrenal glands appears to be exponentially linked to clinical stage. We compared FDG-PET107 (Table 48), CT103,104 (Table 49), MRI105 (Table 47) against gold standard histology to determine the status of adrenal metastases in lung cancer patients.

In summary, the sensitivity of FDG PET is in the range from 84% to 100%, whilst the specificity is in the range from 80% to 100% (Grade III DS) compared to MRI, sensitivity: 100%, specificity: 59% (Grade II DS) and CT scans, sensitivity: 93% and specificity: 92% (Grade II DS), yet it is important to remember the heterogeneity of patients in each study. The available evidence in this area is not sufficient to depart from the current practice of routinely scanning the adrenals during the initial staging CT.

5.7.4.4 Bone Metastasis

Current methods of detecting bone metastases include X-ray of the local area, bone scintigraphy, CT, MRI and FDG-PET scans.

This review undertook the comparison of bone scintigraphy108110 (Table 49) and FDG-PET108110 (Table 50) and MRI109 (Table 51) to diagnose bone
metastases within groups of lung cancer patients. Again, the breakdown of results was not specific enough to include results by specific stage or symptoms. However, the reported results from all retrieved studies concluded that FDG-PET was the most accurate (sensitivity: 93%, specificity: 98%) (Grade III DS) followed by MRI (sensitivity: 92%, specificity: 94%) (Grade III DS) and finally bone scanning (sensitivity: 88%, specificity: 64%) (Grade III DS). These results however, are based on small numbers and heterogeneous groups of patients and cannot be relied upon to make a recommendation that departs from current clinical practice.

5.7.5 Potential Candidates for Surgery

5.7.5.1 Potential Candidates for Radical Radiotherapy
No systematic reviews were retrieved for this section and a full literature search retrieved four observational studies55-57 that reported therapy changes (Table 53). A pooled weighted average for therapy changes that ensued as a result of the FDG PET scan during work-up to radical radiotherapy was 42%. In addition to this, one study reported that 23% of patients were downstaged as a result of the FDG-PET scan while two studies reported that between 27-45% of patients were upstaged.

In conclusion, those patients who are potential candidates for radical radiotherapy would benefit from a FDG-PET scan prior to their treatment (Level 2+).

5.7.5.2 Potential Candidates for Radical Radiotherapy

5.7.5.3 Potential Candidates for Surgery

One RCT52 reported futile thoracotomy rate as its primary outcome. This study has an unusually high surgery rate considering the group of patients recruited for it and included a high incidence of thoracotomy for benign disease when compared to current UK practice. In addition the comparator CT scans were performed suboptimally in half of the patients, without intravenous contrast, excluded the liver and were non spiral. Nevertheless the results can be interpreted as five patients need an FDG-PET scan to avoid one futile thoracotomy. In addition, one observational study53 incorporated patients eligible for both surgery and radical RT reported that 83% of patients undergoing a pre-treatment FDG-PET underwent a management change (i.e. change from one radical treatment to another or from a radical treatment to a palliative one) (Table 52).

In conclusion, potential candidates for surgical resection would benefit from a FDG-PET scan (Level 2+).

5.7.5.4 Potential Candidates for Surgery

5.8 Staging of Small Cell Lung Cancer

Small cell lung cancer (SCLC) patients are staged, as described earlier, into two categories: limited and extensive disease. Extensive disease refers to cases where there is metastatic spread. Thus intrathoracic staging in SCLC has little clinical relevance.

Most SCLC patients present with symptoms of metastases and a systematic review found that two thirds have extensive disease on presentation46. This review also found, from combining the figures from five studies with a total of 1,808 patients, that the most common sites of metastases at presentation were the liver and bone. Thus further investigation for distant metastases is always indicated in SCLC.

For symptomatic patients the choice and site of staging examination should be guided by clinical examination. For asymptomatic patients a history and physical examination should be followed by a choice of one or more of the following tests: CT of chest, upper abdomen (liver and adrenals) or bone scan. Tests should be performed sequentially and the testing stopped once a metastatic site is found54 (see 5.9.5). Deterbeck et al looked at the reliability of neurological examinations for staging SCLC and concluded that CT or MRI of the brain was not worthwhile in asymptomatic patients55.

5.9 Economics of Lung Cancer Staging

5.9.1 Search Results
The studies on economic analysis pertaining to PET scanning are summarised in Table 54 and Table 55. The rest of the staging economics studies52-54 are summarised in Table 56 and Table 57.

There were a number of cost-effectiveness studies evaluating PET scanning; however, we focused more on the report of the HTBS, the only one from a UK context.

The evidence concerning the cost-effectiveness of PET scanning was largely inconclusive or inapplicable. Given its potential clinical importance and substantial cost, an original cost-effectiveness study from an NHS perspective was conducted to enable the GDG to make a decision in this area.

5.9.2 Report of the Health Technology Board for Scotland (Bradbury et al, 2002)
Bradbury et al56 conducted a cost-effectiveness analysis to evaluate different strategies for staging NSCLC. They used a decision tree, which calculated cost-effectiveness in terms of the cost per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY) gained.

The model evaluated the use of PET in patients that had the following characteristics:

- Definite diagnosis of NSCLC
- Fit for surgery
- Have already had CXR, bronchoscopy & chest CT

Therefore the model does not consider the use of PET in patients who have symptoms that might indicate metastasis and it does not assume that routine scanning for metastasis has taken place (other than with chest CT). However, it is assumed that 10% have distant metastases that are only detected by PET.

Appendix one, figure two shows strategies evaluated for the patient group. The cost-effectiveness of each strategy was evaluated separately for patients that had enlarged nodes on their CT scan (CT node positive) and those that had normal-sized nodes on CT (CT node negative).

Bradbury et al conducted their own meta-analyses to estimate the sensitivity and specificity of PET, as reported above (see sections 5.6.2, 5.6.3, 5.7.3, 5.7.4 and 5.7.5). The unit cost of a PET scan (high resolution with attenuation correction) was estimated from a detailed costing of proposed Scottish PET facility. Estimates of the other model parameters (probabilities, life expectancies, quality of life valuations and unit costs) were extracted from the literature, mainly from Dietlein et al42.

Results - CT Node-positive

It was found that strategies 3 and 7 dominate the other strategies, that is to say that compared with one of these two, each of the other strategies was both more costly and less effective. Strategy 3 (mediastinoscopy all and no PET) had second best outcome. Only strategy 7 (mediastinoscopy after positive PET) had a higher expected level of QALYs at an incremental cost of £59,000 per QALY gained. Hence PET scanning does not appear to be cost-effective in CT positive patients, when using a threshold of £30,000 per QALY gained. None of the strategies were clearly differentiated apart from strategy 2, which had the worst outcome and highest cost.

Results - CT Node-negative

Strategies 1, 3 and 7 were found to dominate the others. Strategy 3 had second best outcome. Only strategy 7 had a higher expected level of QALYs at an incremental cost of £10,500 per QALY gained. Hence PET scanning appears to be cost-effective in CT negative patients, however the model suggests that those who are PET positive should be given a follow-up mediastinoscopy, given its 100% specificity for N2/3 disease.

The overall health outcome in terms of life expectancy or quality-adjusted life expectancy was very similar for all strategies (except strategy 2, where everybody receives only best supportive care). This suggests that the cost-effectiveness results are not robust to changes in the model parameters.
5.9.3 Overseas Economic Evidence for the use of FDG-PET in Staging NSCLC

The other economic analyses are presented in Table 5.4 and Table 5.5. Of the eight previously published studies, there were six cost-effectiveness, one cost-accuracy and one cost-analysis.

The three cost-effectiveness studies were all based on decision analyses[2,13]. Their results were similar in that all four studies seemed to show that mediastinoscopy after a positive PET was the most effective strategy. Dietlein et al14 found that this strategy is highly cost-effective in CT negative patients and fairly cost-effective in CT positive patients. Scott et al14 found, as did the HTBS report15, that this strategy is only cost-effective in CT negative patients. Gambhir et al14 did not evaluate PET separately for CT negative and CT positive patients.

As with the HTBS report Bradbury et al15, Dietlein et al14, Scott et al14, and Gambhir et al14 found very little difference in life expectancy (or in cost) between strategies, implying that the models are sensitive to the model parameters.

The cost-effectiveness analysis of Verboom et al16 based on a Dutch RCT, compared conventional work up (CWI) with CWI+PET. Their results showed that additional use of PET in the staging of patients with NSCLC reduced unnecessary thoracotomies by 20% when compared to CWI alone and was cost-saving.

Among the cost-effectiveness analysis, two were based on prospective studies. Von Schulthess et al17 compared CT and bone scanning with whole body PET. They found that whole-body PET staging was a dominant strategy over the other PET staging was more effective in terms of reducing unnecessary operations and was cost-saving. Fritscher-Ravens et al’s 18 analysis based on two-year prospective study comparing computed tomography, PET and endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) with FNA for the staging of potentially operable patients with suspected or proven lung cancer. The results indicated that PET strategy was cost-effective.

5.9.4 Original Economic Evaluation of FDG-PET in Staging NSCLC

We conducted an economic evaluation for two groups of NSCLC patients that were identified as having the most to gain from PET scanning:

> Potentially operable patients with normal sized lymph nodes on CT being considered for surgery

For both patient groups we have estimated costs and health outcomes for different strategies using decision analysis. Our decision analytic models are adapted from those previously reported in the literature, especially the HTBS model 15 and Dietlein et al14. For each strategy the primary outcomes are:

> Health service cost per patient

For the patients being considered for surgery, three strategies were compared:

> Patients go straight to thoracotomy

> Patients have a mediastinoscopy and then receive either radical radiotherapy (Med=N2/3) or thoracotomy (Med=N0/1)

> Patients have a PET scan and then receive either active supportive care (PET=M1+) or thoracotomy (PET=M0 N0/1) or go on to mediastinoscopy (PET=M0 N2/3)

For the patients being considered for radical radiotherapy, only two strategies were compared:

> Patients go straight to radical radiotherapy

> Patients have a PET scan and then receive either active supportive care (PET=M1+) or thoracotomy (PET=M0 N0/1) or radical radiotherapy (PET=M0 N2/3)

It is assumed that all patients (except those that have successful surgery) go on to have active supportive care including chemotherapy.

A detailed description of methods and results can be found in appendix four. Some of the assumptions remain unchanged from the HTBS model. Substantial changes are as follows:

> When replicating their model, we found that the authors of the HTBS model had (inadvertently) used sensitivity and specificity that had been calculated for CT positive patients when they should have those figures calculated for CT negative patients. We corrected this.

> PET sensitivity and specificity in the HTBS model were based on nodes alone (not on distant metastases). For the detection of distant metastases, in their base case analysis, they had in effect assumed that the sensitivity was the same for distant metastases as it was for nodes in N0/1 patients but a 0% sensitivity in N2/3 patients. We have calculated sensitivity and specificity specifically for detecting distant metastases (see 5.7.3.1) and have applied them consistently. We have also sought to take account of the (modest) cost of following up false positive PET scans for distant metastases with biopsies.

> We have updated the unit costs, including the cost of a PET scan. The cost of mediastinoscopy in the HTBS model seemed unrealistically low.

> We have re-estimated the underlying distribution of disease. In particular, unlike the HTBS model we do not assume that distant metastases have the same prevalence in N2/3 patients as in N2/3 patients.

> For patients with numerous enlarged lymph nodes on their CT scan we considered the most appropriate comparator to be radical radiotherapy, rather than thoracotomy or mediastinoscopy.

> In both our models we explicitly estimate the number of patients receiving radical radiotherapy, and we estimate the corresponding implications for cost, survival and toxicity. The 1Y gained from radical radiotherapy compared with active supportive care was estimated to be 9 months.

> For both thoracotomy and radical radiotherapy we assume a conservative 50% reduction in quality of life for eight weeks attributable to the temporary effects of treatment.

Appendix four shows the main outcomes for patients being considered for surgery. The Mediastinoscopy strategy is dominated by PET strategy (i.e. it is both more costly and less effective). Compared with the thoracotomy strategy, the PET strategy had:

> fewer futile thoracotomies (avoided in 22% of patients),

> fewer surgical deaths (1% of patients are spared a surgical death) and

> more appropriate selection of patients for radical radiotherapy.

This resulted in:

> improved life expectancy (0.04 years per patient) and

> quality-adjusted life expectancy (0.04 QALYs per patient).

Cost savings, mainly from thoracotomies averted, offset much but not all of the cost of PET scanning. The estimated incremental cost-effectiveness of the PET strategy compared with the thoracotomy strategy was £7,200 per QALY gained.
5.9.5 Routine Extrathoracic Screening in Lung Cancer

Three studies have evaluated routine extrathoracic screening using technologies other than PET in patients with potentially operable NSCLC (Table S6 and Table S7).

Colice et al.111 constructed a decision analysis to evaluate routine head CT compared to symptomatic head CT to detect brain metastasis. The model was developed for a US context. The details of the model are not reported entirely transparently. They found that routine screening added just 1.1 days to the life expectancy of the average patient. This gain was found to be not cost-effective at a cost of about £44,000 per QALY gained.

Tanaka et al.112 and Canadian Lung Oncology Group (Guyatt et al.111) both evaluated routine CT (abdomen & brain) & bone scan versus symptomatic scanning, from a Japanese and Canadian perspective respectively. Tanaka’s results were based on a retrospective cohort, whereas the Canadian study was RCT-based. The Canadian study saw a bigger reduction in the number of thoracoscopies than the Japanese study (5/318 versus 3/755) and hence they differed considerably in their cost implications; Can$819 (£332) per patient cost saving versus US$1,226 (£677) additional cost. However, this might not be down to inconsistency, as the Canadian group had a broader patient selection than Tanaka et al.112, who considered only T1-2/3A patients.

Richardson et al.111 presented the cost of different permutations of the following tests: bone scan, abdominal CT, cranial CT and bone marrow aspiration & biopsy (Table S6 and Table S7). At the end of each permutation were chest CT plus pulmonary function test. The population was all patients with newly diagnosed SCLC and no clinical evidence of extensive disease. In each case testing was halted once evidence of extensive disease was found. If all six tests did not indicate extensive disease then the diagnosis was limited disease. The lowest cost permutation was bone scan and the order of the tests undertaken is as follows: Bone scan → Abdominal CT → Bone marrow aspirate & biopsy → Cranial CT → Thoracic CT → Pulmonary function test.

At $2,817, this was only $130 lower than the most expensive permutation but was $1,400 less than routinely conducting all six tests. Hence they included that it matters more that tests are performed sequentially and the testing stopped once a metastatic site is found than the exact sequence of the test.

Houston et al.111 performed a cost analysis comparing Ga scanning versus conventional routine testing for distant metastases (radiouclide liver and bone scan, brain CT scan) in the staging of lung cancer patients. The decision analysis showed that the Ga scan was more costly than routine staging procedures. However, it should be noted that FDG PET has superseded Gallium, if any radiouclide is used, and Gallium is not used routinely for lung cancer staging in the UK.

On the basis of the limited evidence here, there is not a strong case for extrathoracic screening in patients that are asymptomatic for metastasis. It is possible then that screening of asymptomatic patients is cost-effective in some subgroups but not in others. None of the above studies explicitly considered PET scanning for extrathoracic screening. The studies in 5.9.2-5.9.4 evaluated PET both for intrathoracic and extrathoracic staging. If PET were to become routine for some patients then this would almost certainly preclude the need for other extrathoracic imaging for these patients, although there may still be a role for CT scanning of the head, given the lack of accuracy of PET in this area.

5.9.6 MRI Scanning in the Staging of Lung Cancer

There have been four studies (all from the USA) that have evaluated MRI scanning in the staging of lung cancer; two with regard to adrenal gland evaluation, one on brain metastasis and one investigating the use of MRI in staging SCLC.

May et al.113 found that high-dose MRI (0.3mmol/kg) for brain metastasis could save about $2,251 per patient compared with low-dose MRI (0.1mmol/kg) for averting 3 craniotomies and 2 aggressive courses of radiation therapy in 27 patients with CT evidence of bone metastasis.

Jelinek et al.113 compared MRI with CT, bone scan and bone marrow biopsy. In a prospective cohort of 25 patients diagnosed with SCLC. They estimated that the use of MRI could save approximately $481 per patient and an extra 5 patients were found to have extensive disease.

Schwartz et al.113 conducted a decision analysis based on a prospective cohort (n=42) to compare chemical shift MRI with CT-guided biopsy in patients with an enlarged adrenal gland on CT. They included only staging costs and found a saving of $15 per patient with MRI due to 55% of patients avoiding biopsy.

Remer et al.113 also carried out a decision-analysis of different strategies for evaluating adrenal masses including:

a) CT with an adenoma or non-adenoma threshold of 10H followed by MRI; and

b) CT with an adenoma or non-adenoma threshold of 0H followed by CT biopsy.

They found that a) was most the cost-effective strategy at a cost of $16,370 per Q/L gained compared with b).

As with Schwartz et al., they only included the costs of staging and not treatment costs.

In summary, the studies’ results suggest that MRI of the adrenal gland after CT could be cost-effective. So could the use of high-dose contrast MRI.

5.9.7 Thoracic CT and Mediastinoscopy

There has been a recent cost-effectiveness analysis115 and three older cost analyses116,117,118 evaluating the use of chest CT before mediastinoscopy. Two are Canadian studies115,116 and the others relate to the USA117,118. The study by Black et al.115 found cost savings but is of minor interest given that the comparison was with surgery not mediastinoscopy. Both of the Canadian studies found modest cost savings attributable to the introduction of CT scanning to select patients for mediastinoscopy.

Estmaola et al.119 also found cost savings attributable to the use of CT before mediastinoscopy, however, they found that mediastinoscopy without CT had better patient outcomes and was more cost-effective than CT for T2/3. The greater effectiveness of routine mediastinoscopy is not surprising given that it is considerably more accurate than CT. In T1 patients, where there is a lower risk of nodal involvement the incremental effect of routine mediastinoscopy was small (0.022 LY gained) and not cost-effective (€49,000 per QALY gained). They recommend that mediastinoscopy be used selectively in T1 patients; however, it is possible that the modest health gains are cost-effective using UK unit costs instead of US costs.

Hence the studies show that routine mediastinoscopy is more effective but also more
5.9.8 Conclusions and Discussion

The setting of the studies was overseas in all but one case. There are a number of problems associated with using cost-effectiveness studies set in health systems overseas. Estimates of effectiveness may be inappropriate because of differences in the population. The cost of resources used can vary considerably between countries. For example, the cost of clinical staff is lower in the UK than in certain other countries. The resources used in the subsequent treatment will vary between countries according to local protocols. This may also impact on the estimated health gain for patients diagnosed.

Studies varied in their assumptions. Not all studies followed-up patients so that treatment costs could be included and, among those that did, treatment pathways varied. Patient selection could also have affected the estimates of cost-effectiveness.

Our own economic model shows that PET scanning reduces the amount of futile surgery and futile radical radiotherapy but is unlikely to reduce the overall cost of staging and treatment. PET is likely to be cost-effective in patients with normal-sized lymph nodes on CT (this is supported by the published health economic evidence). We also found that PET scanning is cost-effective in patients being considered for radical radiotherapy because some patients will be down-staged and others can avoid the morbidity associated with radical radiotherapy.

As with all studies that are not UK-based, and US studies in particular, we need to be cautious about transferring the results; certainly prices but also other parameters may be very different. The studies compared different strategies, were based on small sample sizes and had limited follow-up.

5.10 Recommendations

5.10.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations for NSCLC

In the assessment of mediastinal and chest wall invasion:

- CT alone may not be reliable (B(D5))
- Other techniques such as ultrasound should be considered where there is doubt (D(GP))
- Surgical assessment may be necessary if there are no contraindications to resection (D(GP))

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) should not routinely be performed to assess the stage of the primary tumour (T-stage) in NSCLC (C(D5))

MRI should be performed, where necessary to assess the extent of disease, for patients with superior sulcus tumours (B(D5))

Every cancer network should have a system of rapid access to FDG-PET scanning for eligible patients (D(GP))

Patients who are staged as candidates for surgery on CT should have an FDG-PET scan to look for involved intrathoracic lymph nodes and distant metastases (A(D5))

Patients who are otherwise surgical candidates and have, on CT, limited (1–2 stations) N2/N3 disease of uncertain pathological significance should have an FDC-PET scan (D(GP))

Patients who are candidates for radical radiotherapy on CT should have an FDC-PET scan (B(D5))

Patients who are staged as N0 or N1 and M0 (stages I and II) by CT and FDC-PET and are suitable for surgery should not have cytological/histological confirmation of lymph nodes before surgical resection. (A)

Histological/cytological investigation should be performed to confirm N2/3 disease where FDC-PET is positive. This should be achieved by the most appropriate method. Histological/cytological confirmation is not required. (B(D5))

- Where there is definite distant metastatic disease (B(D5))
- Where there is a high probability that the N2/N3 disease is metastatic (for example, if there is a chain of high FDG uptakes in lymph nodes) (B(D5))

When an FDC-PET scan for N2/N3 disease is negative, biopsy is not required even if the patient’s nodes are enlarged on CT. (B(D5))

If FDC-PET is not available, suspected N2/3 disease, as shown by CT scan (nodes with a short axis > 1 cm), should be histologically sampled in patients being considered for surgery or radical radiotherapy. (D(GP))

An MRI or CT scan should be performed for patients with clinical signs or symptoms of brain metastasis. (D(GP))

An X-ray should be performed in the first instance for patients with localised signs or symptoms of bone metastasis. If the results are negative or inconclusive, either a bone scan or an MRI scan should be offered. (D(GP))
6 Surgery with Curative Intent for Patients with Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

6.1 Introduction
Surgery plays an important role in the treatment of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). This section reviews this role in relation to the stage of cancer and in isolation from other treatment modalities such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy. In later sections (see chapter 9 Combination therapy) surgery is considered within multimodality therapies.

6.2 Techniques included in this review
The systematic review considered surgical procedures commonly used in treating lung cancer patients with an intention to cure. They include pneumonectomy, standard and extended lobectomies and sub lobar resection particularly wedge resection. In addition, the use of a minimally invasive technique such as Video-Assisted Thoracoscopy (VATS) is reviewed.

6.3 Methodology
A systematic review of the literature relating to the surgical management of NSCLC was undertaken. In addition, guidelines from the British Thoracic Society (BTS) and the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) and a systematic review by Detterbeck et al. were reviewed.

6.4 Preoperative selection of patients with Non Small Cell Lung Cancer for surgery
Recent BTS guidelines covering specifically fitness for surgery, regarding age, pulmonary function, cardiovascular fitness, nutrition and performance status (see appendix 2, figure 4 for comparison of Karnofsky and WHO/ Zubrod performance status scales) were reviewed. The guideline development group has accepted the recommendations reached in the BTS publication.

6.5 Risk of Surgery
6.5.1 Mortality
The standard definition of operative death includes mortality within the immediate 30 days following surgery. Based on a recent systematic review of sixteen studies in combination with a further four papers reported from 1980 to 2002 including >250 patients undergoing open thoracic procedures for resection of NSCLC, the weighted average operative mortality for patients undergoing all forms of pulmonary resection (N=41105) was 3.5% (range, 1.0 – 7.6%) (Table 58) (Level 3).

The issue of operative mortality and advancing age was recently addressed in a non-systematic review of 37 studies of surgery in the elderly with NSCLC (Level 3). Though no pooled average was calculated, and the populations were somewhat heterogeneous, a trend was noted toward increasing surgical mortality with increasing age (Table 58) (Level 3).

Operative mortality following lung resections for specific surgical procedures will be discussed under the appropriate sections (Table 58) (Level 3).

6.5.2 Morbidity
Morbidity refers to adverse effects caused by an intervention. Though poorly defined by most authors, surgical morbidity can be further divided according to major or minor complications. Based on studies in combination with three further papers reported from 1980 to 2002 including >150 patients undergoing open thoracic procedures for resection of NSCLC, the overall weighted average morbidity rate for patients undergoing all types of pulmonary resections (N=10098) was 30% (Table 60) (Level 3). Highest morbidity rates were seen in patients undergoing extended resections and undergoing pneumonectomy (Level 3).

6.6 Surgery for Stage I Non Small Cell Lung Cancer
6.6.1 Introduction
Stage I disease is defined as NSCLC in the parenchyma of the lung, no more proximal than 2 cm from the carina, not invading the chest wall or parietal pleura and without nodal involvement (N0) or metastatic disease (M0).

Stage I is further subdivided into IA (T1N0M0) and IB (T2N0M0) and reflects differences in survival, with the former having better 5-year survival. The relationship between tumour size, patient prognosis, and the appropriate cut-off for tumour size (currently 3cm) to classify T1 and T2 tumours is still a matter of controversy. Patients with stage I NSCLC, provided they are medically fit, should be considered for radical local therapy with curative intent.

Expert opinion from a previous guideline on diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer found that surgical resection is generally accepted treatment of choice for stage I disease. Adjuvant or neo-adjuvant therapy will be reviewed in chapter 9 on combination treatment.

6.6.2 Patient Eligibility
An important distinction is whether patients are classified as stage I using clinical staging (c), before any treatment is carried out, or pathological staging (p), with information available after surgical resection. As clinical staging most often refers to radiological staging with CT, clearly the accuracy with which CT detects the presence of mediastinal lymph node involvement (N1, N2 or N3 disease) will influence reliability of clinical staging. The use of mediastinoscopy may improve clinical staging, but methods of staging are often not reported in studies on stage I patients.

The accuracy of pathological staging can also be affected by the extensiveness of the nodal dissection.

6.6.3 Type of Surgical Resection
Pneumonectomy, removal of a lobe of the lung, and pneumonectomy, removal of a whole lung define the anatomical resection. Lobectomy has been the standard surgical treatment for lung cancer even for small tumours and is regarded as the procedure of choice for patients with stage I NSCLC.

Lobectomy has mainly been performed in compromised patients with impaired lung function. There are several types of limited lung resection described. A segmental resection or segmentectomy refers to anatomical dissection and complete removal of a bronchopulmonary segment of lung. A wedge resection is just what it says, and involves excising the air leak and bleeding by suturing or ‘stapling’ across non-anatomical planes of the lung. As a procedure it is most suitable in the context of thoracoscopy.

6.6.4 Limited Resection versus Lobectomy
A systematic review of the literature identified one recent review that included thirteen observational studies. A further three non-randomised studies are also reported. Only one prospective, randomised trial of limited resection versus lobectomy was identified.

Based on a recent systematic review of eleven studies that examined 5-year survival after open resection of pathological stage I and II NSCLC in combination with two further papers reported from 1980 to 2003 including >250 patients (N=8037), the weighted average mean 5-year survival was 69% for stage IA and 52% for stage IB NSCLC (Table 61). For stage I NSCLC, T status has prognostic significance, with every study showing a survival average for T1 compared to T2 patients. The survival difference ranged between 12-23% for T1 versus T2 patients (Table 61).

Patient selection in terms of the type of procedure carried out will reflect the patient’s fitness to withstand such a procedure. In studies comparing lobectomy versus a limited resection (Table 62), the selection criteria for a limited resection are often vague, based on the surgeon’s experience, co-morbid disease or parameters (such as pulmonary function) that are not clearly stated.
6.6.4.1 Effectiveness
Amongst the observational studies reported, we found significant heterogeneity. Several studies looked at only segmentectomy with or without lymph node exploration. A number of studies included some stage II patients. Inclusion of a comparison group (lobectomy) was variable. Limited resection was performed as the procedure of choice as most patients would have tolerated a lobectomy. Size of tumour reported amongst studies varied, with most including tumours of <2cm, reflecting increasing interest in whether the survival advantage of lobectomy over limited resection is less marked with smaller tumours. The weighted average 5-year survival for segmentectomy versus lobectomy was 62% versus 80% respectively (Table 62) (Level 3). Two studies reported on loco-regional recurrence at 5-years, showing local recurrences to be more frequent after segmentectomy.

Seven observational studies reported on wedge resection as a compromise operation as compared to lobectomy. Heterogeneity was noted in what constituted a poor risk patient. The weighted average 5-year survival for wedge resection as a compromise procedure versus lobectomy was 51% versus 63% respectively (Table 62) (Level 3).

The only prospective, randomised trial of limited resection versus lobectomy allocated 247 eligible patients to either approach. The weighted average 5-year survival for wedge resection as a compromise procedure versus lobectomy was 51% versus 63% respectively (Table 62) (Level 3). The only prospective, randomised trial of limited resection versus lobectomy included 471 eligible patients with stage I-IIA NSCLC with no medical contraindications. Surgery is the primary treatment choice (Level 4), aiming for clear surgical margins. For patients who are able to tolerate a lobaresection, lobectomy is preferable to a limited resection (wedge resection or segmentectomy) in an acceptable alternative (Table 62) (Level 1+). Pending further research, patients with stage I or II non small cell lung cancer who would not tolerate lobectomy because of comorbid disease or pulmonary compromise, should be considered for limited resection or radical radiotherapy (Table 62) (Level 3).

Further research on the role of limited resection in comparison to lobar resection for small lung tumours is required.

6.6.4.2 Mortality and Morbidity
A limited resection, such as a segmentectomy or a non-anatomic wedge resection may be performed through either a standard thoracotomy or using a video-assisted thoracoscopic (VATS) approach. A systematic review of the literature identified one recent review that included fourteen observational studies that underwent wedge resection by a standard thoracotomy. In addition, three further observational studies were included (N=6550) (Table 59). The weighted average 30-day or in-hospital mortality was 3% (range, 0-6%). The authors did not report on morbidity.

Lobectomy is the most common procedure employed for resection of lung cancer. A systematic review of the literature regarding morbidity and mortality associated with open lobectomy for lung cancer identified one recent review that included eighteen observational studies and a further three series (N=24221) (Table 59). The weighted average 30-day or in-hospital mortality was 3% (range, 0-9%) (Table 59) (Level 3). The authors did not report on morbidity, though one series reported a complication rate of 28% for lobectomy (Table 60) (Level 3).

6.6.5 Mediastinal lymph node evaluation in stage I NSCLC
Various surgical techniques for mediastinal lymph node evaluation at the time of limited or lobaresection have been developed. Options include:

- No mediastinal lymph node biopsies
- Mediastinal lymph node sampling of suspicious lymph nodes
- Systematic mediastinal lymph node sampling
- Radical en bloc resection of mediastinal lymph nodes and surrounding mediastinal fat (lymphadenectomy)

However, in systematically reviewing studies comparing techniques (Table 63), variations in definition of lymph node dissection were apparent. The importance of which technique is employed differs:

defers to differential benefit to definitive staging and survival and the potential associated morbidity.

6.6.5.1 Effectiveness
The systematic review identified five RCTs that included stage I patients and evaluated the role of routine or systematic mediastinal lymph node sampling and radical lymphadenectomy in relation to survival difference and pathological staging (Table 63). Observational studies were disregarded.

One prospective RCT comparing radical mediastinal lymphadenectomy with mediastinal lymph node sampling (N=168, all stages) found no differences in survival or loco-regional recurrence in stage matched patients (Level 1+). However, in regard to staging, the same author later analysed the data. Though no differences were found between the two techniques in identifying pN2 disease, more patients with multi-station nodal involvement were found as expected in the radical lymphadenectomy group (57% versus 17%, P=0.007) (Level 1+). The same authors were able to conclude that one technique has an advantage over the other.

Two recent RCTs did find a survival advantage for a more radical approach to mediastinal node dissection. One RCT compared radical mediastinal lymphadenectomy with mediastinal lymph node sampling in 169 eligible patients with stage I-IIA NSCLC. Amongst stage I patients (N=42 versus 31), 5-year survival was 62% versus 42% (P=0.044) for radical lymphadenectomy and mediastinal lymph node sampling respectively (Level 1+). A further RCT compared systematic mediastinal lymph node sampling to mediastinal sampling of suspicious nodes in 471 eligible patients with stage I-IIA NSCLC. Amongst stage I patients (N=58 versus 98), 5-year survival was 82% versus 58% (P=0.0104) (Level 1+). Both studies found a survival benefit toward more aggressive techniques of mediastinal lymph node evaluation in stage I patients.

6.6.5.2 Morbidity
In comparing complications associated with the various techniques employed to evaluate mediastinal lymph nodes, one RCT found no significant difference between radical lymphadenectomy and mediastinal nodal sampling (38% versus 47%, P=NS) (Level 1+). However, in looking at specific postoperative complications, haemorrhage (>2units) and air leak (>5days) were more commonly recorded following radical lymphadenectomy (11 versus 5 patients with haemorrhage (P=0.051) and 9 versus 4 patients with air leaks (P=0.075)) (Level 1+). In contrast, an RCT comparing the two methods in patients with small peripheral tumours noted the morbidity of the radical lymphadenectomy group was significantly higher (22% versus 3% P-value not stated) (Level 1+).

6.6.5.3 Conclusions on mediastinal lymph nodes evaluation in stage I NSCLC
Due to the inconsistency of the results, we cannot conclude that one technique has an advantage over the other in terms of survival (Level 1+). Furthermore, no conclusion can be drawn regarding whether one technique of mediastinal node dissection has greater morbidity than another (Level 1+). However, based on consensus opinion in the literature regarding improved accuracy of staging with a systematic approach to lymph node sampling, the group have included a good practice point on its use.
The results of a RCT which began in 1999 to re-evaluate the therapeutic benefits of radical lymphadenectomy in patients with N0,1 NSCLC is awaited.

6.6.6 Open resection versus thorascopic resection

The development of minimally invasive Video-Assisted Thoracic Surgery (VATS) has significantly altered the management of patients with undiagnosed indeterminate or solitary pulmonary nodules. Increasingly, VATS is being used for resections in lung cancer. A systematic review of the literature identified papers that examined the role of VATS in lung resections, most of which were concerned with technique, feasibility and safety of the procedure. Few papers examined the effectiveness of VATS resection as compared to conventional open lung resection. We noted a degree of variability in the techniques used to perform the thorascopic resection in papers identified. Because of problems associated with clarity of definitions used for VATS, Video-assisted mini-thoracotomy was included in review, though we found few papers.

6.6.6.1 Effectiveness

The systematic review identified nine observational studies but no RCTs that included stage I patients and evaluated the role of thorascopic resection as compared to open resection in relation to survival difference and pathological staging 12,28 (Table 64). The average weighted 5-year survival in patients with stage I NSCLC following VATS lobectomy was 76% in the four studies that had followed-up patients for that length of time 12,28 (Table 64) (Level 3). It compares favourably with 5-year survival following open resection (69% for stage IIA and 52% for stage IB, Table 62). However patient selection based on the observational studies reviewed, is likely to be highly selective (size of tumour <5cm in most of the studies reviewed). Furthermore, the extent of lymph node sampling and reporting of sampling varied amongst the studies.

6.6.6.2 Morbidity

The intra- and postoperative outcomes, including complications associated with VATS, reported in two RCTs 12,28 and eight observational retrospective case series are presented 12,28-30 (Table 65). One prospective RCT 12 comparing VATS lobectomy with muscle-sparing thoracotomy and lobectomy (N=55) found no differences in operative time, intra-operative complications or blood loss between the two techniques (Level 1+). Postoperative complications were higher in the thoracotomy group (53% versus 24%, P<0.05), but the length of stay, and incidence of post-thoracotomy pain was not significantly different (Level 1+). The other RCT 12 compared Video-assisted mini-thoracotomy with muscle sparing thoracotomy for performing lobectomy in 67 patients. No significant differences in postoperative complications, postoperative pulmonary function and length of hospital stay were noted (Level 1+). However, postoperative thoracotomy pain, as measured in the first 8 days using a visual analogue scale was significantly different (P<0.001) in favour of the minimal invasive procedure (Level 1+). Eight retrospective case series (N=1469) with >50 patients reported on VATS lobectomy in terms of its technical feasibility and safety. One other smaller study (N=64) was included as it had evaluated pulmonary function in the two groups 13. Overall, the weighted average operative mortality of VATS lobectomy was 0.7% (range 0–3%) and a weighted average postoperative morbidity of 12% (range 2-21%). This compares favourably to the average weighted mortality and morbidity for conventional open lobectomy of 3% (range, 0.9%), and 28% (from one series 13) respectively (Level 3).

The average weighted conversion to open procedure was 11% (range 0-17%), and the average weighted mean operating time was 127 mins (range, 75-144 mins) with significant variability in operating time noted (Level 3). The weighted average length of stay was 5 days (range, 2-7 days). One study reported on pre- and postoperative pulmonary function in patients undergoing either VATS lobectomy or open lobectomy. Though not stated by the author, Kaeda (1998) in the original paper, preservation of pulmonary function was better in the VATS group (P=0.001) 13 (Level 3). One RCT however found no significant difference 12 (Level 1+).

6.6.6.3 Conclusions

VATS lobectomy as compared to conventional open lobectomy appears to be a safe procedure with comparable, and maybe lower morbidity and mortality (Level 3). Regarding its perceived benefits over conventional surgery there is currently little evidence to support significant preservation in pulmonary function with VATS 12,28 or a shorter length of stay (Level 1+). Early postoperative thoracotomy pain was reported as significantly less in one RCT 12 and a non-significant trend toward less pain in the VATS group in another 12 (Level 1+). Further evaluation of the short-term outcomes of minimally invasive thorascopic resection is required.

Based on observational studies only, survival following VATS resection seems to be equally favourable as compared to open resection (Level 3), though the VATS resection groups are likely to be a highly selective group. Further evaluation, through prospective, randomised trials is required.

6.7 Surgery for Stage II Non Small Cell Lung Cancer (N1 disease)

6.7.1 Introduction

Stage II NSCLC is defined as a T1 or T2 cancer with N1 nodal involvement but no distant metastasis, or a T3 cancer with no nodal or distant metastasis. It is further divided into IIA (T1N1M0) and IIB (T2N1M0 and T3N0M0). Though T3N0 tumours are included in the IIB stage, this section deals primarily with T1 and T2 cancers with N1 nodal disease. This was because it was felt by the guideline group that the biological implications of direct invasion of chest wall or mediastinum without nodal involvement (T3N0), may not be the same as tumours which have spread to intrapulmonary nodes but do not involve chest wall or mediastinum directly (T1,2N1) despite similar survival. Furthermore, T3N0 make up only a small proportion of stage II cancers 40. Thus in essence this section deals with N1 disease with T3N0 tumours discussed in section 6.8.

As with stage I NSCLC, patients with stage II NSCLC, provided they are medically fit, should be considered for radical local therapy with curative intent. Surgical resection with clear surgical margins is currently the generally accepted treatment of choice 45 though no RCTs were identified that directly compared surgery against other modalities.

6.7.2 Patient Eligibility

The number of lung cancer patients with clinical stage II disease is small, representing 5-10% of patients treated in the most recent surgical series 42,43. They have therefore, often been included in studies with either stage I or stage IIIA patients. However, pathologically stage II NSCLC represents approximately 15-25% of resected cancers 44. Direct comparison of studies is made difficult by several revisions of the staging system affecting the definitions of what constitutes stage II disease. Only papers that clearly distinguished stage II patients were included. As with stage I NSCLC, differences between clinical and pathological staging influence apparent outcomes.

Based on a recent systematic review 44 of eleven studies 42,43,14,188,136,139,196-203 that examined 5-year survival after resection of pathological stage IIA and IIB (N1) NSCLC in combination with two further papers 14,44 (Table 66) including >50 patients (N=3459), the weighted average mean 5-year survival was 45% for stage IIA and 33% for stage IIB (N1) NSCLC (Level 3). As with stage I, for stage II NSCLC, T status has prognostic significance, with every study except one 43 showing a survival advantage for T1 compared to T2 patients (Level 3). The survival difference ranged between 2:19% for T1 versus T2 patients.

6.7.3 Sleeve Resection versus Pneumonectomy

A sleeve lobectomy offers an alternative surgical technique in centrally located tumours where otherwise pneumonectomy would be necessary. Bronchial sleeve resection was introduced as a means of conserving lung parenchyma in patients with compromised pulmonary function. More recently, sleeve resection has been proposed routinely in the management of patients with anatomically appropriate centrally located tumours, even in patients with sufficient pulmonary reserve to permit pneumonectomy 44.
In identifying appropriate studies comparing sleeve lobectomy with pneumonectomy, we found difficulties in the classification of tumours resected by a sleeve lobectomy and subsequent staging.

**Effectiveness**

The NCC-AAC identified two recent systematic reviews that examined studies comparing sleeve lobectomy with pneumonectomy\(^{1,245}\). One review included studies examining the role of sleeve lobectomy as a compromise procedure\(^{1,245}\), the other considered only studies where the majority of patients undergoing sleeve lobectomy had acceptable lung function\(^{1,245}\). Only three studies appeared in both analyses (Table 67). The studies included comprised retrospective analyses of outcomes in patients treated with sleeve lobectomy with matched or unmatched control subjects who underwent pneumonectomy. The number of patients undergoing sleeve lobectomy as a compromise procedure was variably reported. We identified no RCTs in the literature search.

The first systematic review examined comparative studies of >50 patients undergoing sleeve resection (excluding sleeve pneumonectomy) for NSCLC\(^{1,245}\) (Table 67). In total, ten studies were included (N=1083), though difficulties in comparing such studies were identified. In particular, the stage of tumour resected was often unclear with little detail given on T and N status. Five of the studies noted >90% of patients undergoing sleeve resection as a compromise procedure. The weighted average 5-year survival for stage II disease was 41% (Level 3). The weighted average for local recurrence following sleeve resection was 15% (Level 3). However, the author noted that most studies have reported data using the 1976 staging system (TINI included in stage I). The stage of disease within stage IIB (T3N0M0), stage IIIA (T3N1-2M0) and stage IIB (T3N1M0) based on survival outcomes. Though the overall survival appears to support the current classification, issues related to tumour behaviour, recurrence patterns and treatment strategies may be different from that of T2N1 (stage IIB) or T1-N2 (stage IIIC)\(^{1,245}\). The behaviour and survival of different categories of T3N0 tumours may also be different. Therefore, the systematic review of literature regarding the surgical treatment of T3 tumours divided the search results according to chest wall, mediastinal or main bronchus involvement. The NCC-AAC reviewers searched the published data on T3 tumours based on stage, according to local involvement or surgical technique (such as extended resection).

**Conclusions**

The advantage of sleeve resection over pneumonectomy is the preservation of lung tissue that is uninvolved with cancer. It has, therefore, traditionally been advocated as a compromise procedure in patients with limited pulmonary reserve who are unable to tolerate a pneumonectomy\(^{1,245}\). However, from the systematic review that included studies with significant numbers of patients undergoing sleeve resection as a compromise procedure, the weighted average 5-year survival for patients undergoing sleeve resection as a compromise procedure was 41% (Level 3). The weighted average for local recurrence following sleeve resection was 15% (Level 3). However, the author noted that most studies have reported data using the 1976 staging system (TINI included in stage I). The stage of disease within stage IIB (T3N0M0), stage IIIA (T3N1-2M0) and stage IIB (T3N1M0) based on survival outcomes. Though the overall survival appears to support the current classification, issues related to tumour behaviour, recurrence patterns and treatment strategies may be different from that of T2N1 (stage IIB) or T1-N2 (stage IIIC)\(^{1,245}\). The behaviour and survival of different categories of T3N0 tumours may also be different. Therefore, the systematic review of literature regarding the surgical treatment of T3 tumours divided the search results according to chest wall, mediastinal or main bronchus involvement. The NCC-AAC reviewers searched the published data on T3 tumours based on stage, according to local involvement or surgical technique (such as extended resection).

**Patient Eligibility**

T3N0-1 tumours comprise about 5% of NSCLC and in resected patients about 10% of NSCLC\(^{1,245}\). Furthermore, in four surgical case series (N=492) involving >75 unselected patients with T3 disease who were pathologically N0, approximately 60% of the patients have N0 disease and 40% N1 disease\(^{1,245}\). The same series found the weighted average with chest wall involvement was 51%, compared to 29% for mediastinal involvement and 16% for main stem bronchus involvement (Level 3).

Accuracy of staging and variable reliability of modalities such as CT and MRI in assessing clinical T3 disease and likely local invasion has been discussed in chapter 5.

**Effectiveness**

We identified a recent systematic review\(^{1,245}\) that included twelve studies which reported 5-year survival after resection of pathologically staged T3 patients, and reviewed this in combination with one further paper\(^{1,245}\) including >80 patients (N=1499) (Table 69). The weighted average mean 5-year survival was 40% for all T3 disease, 44% for T3N0 and 26% for T3N1 (Level 3).

**Chest Wall involvement**

Studies examining outcome in patients with a peripheral lung tumour invading the parietal pleura or deeper into the chest wall muscle or ribs were reviewed by the NCC-AAC team. Approximately 17 retrospective series\(^{1,245}\) reporting actuarial survival of >20 patients have been systematically reviewed\(^{1,245}\), with two further studies included\(^{1,245}\). Overall, regardless of completeness of resection, the weighted average five-year survival for all T3 patients with chest wall involvement was 33% (Table 70) (Level 3). The weighted average five-year survival for T3N0 patients with chest wall involvement was 40% and for T3N1 patients 22% (Table 70) (Level 3). Therefore, predictably, an important prognostic factor appears to be the presence or absence of lymph node metastases.

Despite difficulties in comparing series because of differences in inclusion criteria, the systematic review\(^{1,245}\) noted a trend to higher survival in those studies reporting on only patients who had complete resections compared with those that included patients with incompletely resected tumours. In a recent non-systematic review of four studies that studied patients undergoing complete versus incomplete resection of T3 chest wall NSCLC\(^{1,245}\), the weighted average 5-year survival following incomplete resection was 7% compared to 27% for complete resection (Table 71) (Level 3).

Long-term survival therefore appears to be influenced by the completeness of the resection, with very few patients surviving beyond two years with micro- or macroscopic residual disease\(^{1,245}\).

**Two retrospective studies\(^{1,245}\) have shown that, in patients undergoing complete resection, the depth of...
cancer, as determined histologically, may affect prognosis, with better five-year survival when the invasion did not extend beyond the parietal pleura (Table 72) (Level 3). Furthermore, the technique of resection of chest wall lesions that are not clearly deeply invasive has also been examined. Several small case series showed a more aggressive approach (en-bloc resection) had better survival as compared to less aggressive method (extra-pleural resection)242-246 (Table 72) (Level 3). However, a later series found no difference among patients who were resected by either technique provided a complete resection was achieved247 (Table 72) (Level 3).

In terms of operative morbidity of chest wall resection incorporating either technique, no study demonstrated a significant difference statistically240-246 (Table 72) (Level 3). Currently there is no evidence apart from a few contradictory retrospective series supporting either approach to resection of T3 NSCLC with chest wall involvement that is not clearly deeply invasive (Level 3).

6.8.4 Mediastinal involvement

The most common mediastinal structures involved in patients with NSCLC T3 disease are the main pulmonary vessels, the pericardium and the mediastinal pleura or fat248. The prognosis in such patients appears to be worse than in patients with peripheral tumours249-254 (Table 70) (Level 3). Few studies were identified that examined this group of patients specifically. Furthermore, very few studies have considered outcome based on structures involved. The largest case series (N=151) showed no significant difference in 5-year survival based on what site was primarily involved255,256.

On the little evidence available, no conclusions can be drawn on the management of T3 disease with mediastinal involvement.

6.8.5 Main Bronchus invasion

Only 16% of patients with T3NO-1 disease reported in a four case series review had main bronchus invasion257 (Table 68) (Level 3). Therefore, studies examining five-year survival in patients with involvement of the main stem bronchus within 2cm of the carina are few in number. As with mediastinal invasion, little data is available on prognostic factors, and no conclusions can be drawn.

6.8.6 Conclusions

The completeness of resection appeared to be an important prognostic factor for both central and peripheral T3 tumours (Level 3). In addition, lymph node status is also important, though the evidence for this is stronger and more consistent in the context of chest wall involvement (Level 3). The depth of chest wall invasion may influence prognosis, though the surgical technique of choice in relation to parietal pleura invasion only remains debatable (Level 3). Studies of central T3 tumours involving mediastinum and main bronchi were fewer in number and more difficult to assess, mainly because of problems in accurate staging. Overall, the prognosis was poorer for central T3 tumours as compared to peripheral T3 tumours (Level 3).

6.9 Surgery for Stage IIIA Non Small Cell Lung Cancer (N2 disease)

6.9.1 Introduction

Stage IIIA NSCLC is a heterogeneous group that includes patients with ipsilateral mediastinal (N2) disease, but also includes T3N1 patients. This subgroup of T3N1, because of its likely biological behaviour was reviewed along with T3N0 under surgery for T3 disease (section 6.8). Based on one case series196, 10% of all patients had local advanced stage IIIA N2 disease at initial presentation. This group is probably the most challenging and controversial subsets of NSCLC both from a perspective of staging as well as treatment258,259. As such, stage IIIA (N2) patients are often regarded as on the border between the generally resectable stage I and II patients and the unresectable stage IIIB patients.

6.9.2 Patient Eligibility

The NCC-ACR reviewers examined papers dealing with the surgical treatment of T1-3N2 disease. Most publications were retrospective, based on pathologically staged patients and therefore not easily applied prospectively to preoperative patients outcome. Another concern was the lack of rigorous pre-treatment staging, with preoperative patient selection in most retrospective series involving combinations of radiological staging with CT alone or with mediastinoscopy on selected cases. Papers that assessed curative surgical intent in N2 patients were included. Studies examining the role of a combined modality approach were not included but are reviewed under Combination therapy (chapter 9).

Several differences were noted among patients classified as stage IIIA (N2) that added to the general heterogeneity of studies reviewed. In particular, whether patient selection was in a surgical series, and therefore based generally on postoperative pathological staging, as opposed to non-surgical series with patient selection based on radiology. In addition, patients in surgical series are likely to have a better performance status than patients in non-surgical reports.

Wide ranges of approaches to preoperative patient selection were identified. At one extreme are patients undergoing minimal selection, with positive N2 disease (usually on mediastinoscopy) who have had attempted resection; compared to a highly select group of patients with obscure N2 disease and negative mediastinoscopy who had N2 disease discovered at the time of resection. Many studies fall somewhere between the two, with staging based on CT and selective mediastinoscopy. The guideline development group believes the use of PET will alter staging methods and criteria and it is likely that fewer N2 cases will be discovered at surgery.

6.9.3 Effectiveness

The likelihood of being able to achieve a complete resection would appear to depend on the degree of selection of patients preoperatively. A recent review examined resectability by reviewing 14 studies of greater than 20 pN2 patients from 1980 to 2000151 (Table 73). The studies were broadly divided according to whether the studies were relatively selective (five studies, N=554) or not (nine studies, N=1289). This was generally based on radiographic criteria (N2 Dedicated) and mediastinoscopy on selected patients. The average weighted percentage of patients who were N2 positive on CT but who did not have a complete resection was 36% as compared to 16% of patients who had undergone a more rigorous selection (negative CT +/- negative mediastinoscopy). However, little difference was found between the two approaches in relation to weighted percentage undergoing complete resection (23% versus 25%) with only a quarter of patients with N2 disease undergoing a complete resection.

The authors concluded that a less rigorous approach to stage IIIA (N2) patients in terms of selection for surgery makes little difference to the number of complete resections achieved but does increase the number of patients who underwent an exploratory thoracotomy without complete resection91.

The overall weighted 5-year survival of stage IIIA (N2) patients in the non-selective group of studies who had undergone complete resection was 26% as compared to 21% in studies which adopted a relatively selective preoperative staging assessment91 (Table 73) (Level 3).

Recognition of the importance of different approaches to patient selection is reflected in survival data, with patients having favourable or ‘occult’ (minimal N2) disease appearing to have improved survival as compared to those patients with clinically ‘bulky’ nodal disease. Some authors258,259 in attempting to develop rational treatment guidelines have chosen to classify N2 disease into four subsets. These are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsets of Stage IIIA (N2)</th>
<th>Source: Robinson et al, 2001198</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subset</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIA1</td>
<td>Incidental nodal metastases found on final pathological examination of resection specimen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIA2</td>
<td>Nodal (single station) metastases recognised intra-operatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIA3</td>
<td>Nodal metastases (single or multiple station) recognised by pre-thoracotomy staging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIA4</td>
<td>Bulky or fixed multi-station N2 disease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The benefits of resection are discussed in relation to these four subsets of N2 disease.
6.9.3.3 Unresectable, Bulky N2 disease (IIIA4)

Incidental N2 disease includes patients who are found to have N2 disease only on a final pathological examination of the resected specimen (stage IIIA4) or as a single nodal station metastasis unexpectedly found at the time of resection (stage IIIA1) despite careful preoperative staging with CT and mediastinoscopy of suspicious lymph nodes. In three studies, (N=182) in which patients had no radiological evidence of N2 disease the average weighted 5-year survival was 33% \( (\text{Table } 73) \) (Level 3). Furthermore, in two studies (N=85) that required a negative mediastinoscopy, weighted 5-year survival was slightly better at 35% \( (\text{Table } 73) \) (Level 3).

6.9.3.2 Potentially Resectable N2 disease (IIIA1)

The presence of N2 disease detected radiographically or at mediastinoscopy had generally been regarded as a sign of inoperable lung cancer \( 24^4 \). Two studies (N=79) within a systematic review have examined survival of patients following complete resection who were positive at mediastinoscopy. The studies showed a 5-year survival of between 9% and 18% \( (\text{Table } 73) \) (Level 3). It is less than the outcome of N2 patients with negative mediastinoscopy but involves few patients. A systematic review of five studies (N=735) \( 24^7 \) that radiologically identified N2 disease prior to resection found a variable 5-year survival ranging from 8.31% (weighted average 23%) \( (\text{Table } 73) \) (Level 3). However, three of the studies included used adjuvant radiotherapy +/- chemotherapy in addition. The stage IIIA1 subset has been targeted for combination therapy and is reviewed further in chapter 9 (Combination therapy).

6.9.3.3 Unresectable, Bulky N2 disease (IIIA4)

Generally regarded as the presence of lymph nodes >2cm in short-axis diameter measured by CT, and including multi-station nodal disease, extra-nodal involvement and groupings of multiple, positive lymph nodes. This subset is reviewed in chapter 9 (Combination therapy).

6.9.4 Conclusions

Regardless of the method of preoperative staging, only a quarter of all clinical N2 patients are completely resectable. Based on data from studies of surgery alone, 5-year survival of N2 patients who are macroscopically completely resectable at operation is approximately 25% \( (\text{Level } 3) \), with best outcome in patients with minimal disease and complete resection \( (\text{Level } 3) \).

6.10 Surgery for stage IIIB (N3 and T4 disease) Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

6.10.1 Introduction

Stage IIIB NSCLC incorporates patients with N3 disease and T4 tumours. It is generally considered to be inoperable, though surgery with curative intent has been applied to patients with T4N0,1 disease, typically in the context of central resections. This section deals primarily with this subgroup of patients, with further consideration of stage IIIB being given in the radiotherapy \( (\text{chapter } 7) \) and combination therapy chapters \( (\text{chapter } 9) \).

6.10.2 Patient Eligibility

T4 disease includes primary tumour involvement of the trachea or carina, superior vena cava, aorta, intra-pericardial pulmonary arteries, oesophagus and vertebral bodies. One systematic review \( 24^8 \) was identified that included eight surgical case series \( (N=322) \) of T4 patients undergoing carinal resections \( (\text{Table } 74) \).

6.10.3 Effectiveness

The weighted operative mortality was 18% \( (\text{range, 4-30%}) (\text{Level } 3) \). The weighted 2-year and 5-year survival was 41% and 27% respectively \( (\text{Table } 74) \) (Level 3). Little information regarding prognostic factors was identified from the literature search.

6.10.4 Conclusions

No conclusions can be drawn from the little data available on the curative surgical treatment of patients with stage IIIB NSCLC.

6.11 Economics of surgery for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

The papers that were found compared VATS with open thoracotomy, sleeve resection versus pneumonectomy or else evaluated lung surgery clinical care pathways. There were no papers evaluating surgery compared with best supportive care.

6.11.1 VATS versus. open thoracotomy

Minimally invasive VATS surgery has been advocated as a cost-effective advance on open lung surgery. However, the assessment of cost-effectiveness is not straightforward. Although some cost savings might be achieved if patients spend less time in the intensive care unit \( \text{(ICU)} \) and less time in hospital \( (\text{Table } 75) \), these might be offset by an increase in the cost of the operation itself. VATS can take longer than open surgery \( (\text{Table } 75) \) and requires expensive equipment and consumables \( (\text{Table } 75) \). If VATS is more costly then it could still be justified economically but only if there are associated improvements in patient outcomes.

Four studies \( (\text{Table } 75) \) compared the cost of VATS with that of open thoracotomy and found VATS to be more costly than open thoracotomy. However, this study had a sample size of just 30. Liu et al \( (\text{Table } 75) \) also find VATS to be more costly, however they recommend a less costly modified version of VATS, of their own devising. They reduce costs by using a form of conventional suturing that avoids excessive use of expensive endoscopic stapling devices. The methods used by Liu et al to cost the different surgical options were not reported, so it is not easy to assess whether this study is also susceptible to the bias observed in some of the other studies.

6.11.2 Sleeve Lobectomy versus. pneumonectomy

Ferguson and Lehman \( (\text{Table } 76) \) constructed a decision model to assess the cost-effectiveness of sleeve lobectomy versus pneumonectomy for patients with stage I and II disease. Hospital costs for surgery and other therapies (chemo-radiotherapy, radiotherapy, and resection) were calculated retrospectively. But details of other therapies were not given. There was no difference in mean five-year survival \( (51.4 \pm 10.1\%) \) for sleeve lobectomy versus pneumonectomy \( (49.1 \pm 5.5\%) \). The QALY calculations favoured sleeve lobectomy over pneumonectomy \( (4.37 \text{ versus } 2.84 \text{ QALY}) \) due to the higher utility associated with sleeve lobectomy. Sleeve lobectomy was cost-effective compared with pneumonectomy at $1,300 per additional QALY gained.

6.11.3 Clinical care pathways

Three US studies \( (\text{Table } 75) \) conducted before-and-after evaluations of clinical care pathways for lung surgery \( (\text{Table } 75) \). Most but not all patients had NSCLC. They achieved reductions in length of stay of up to 10 days and cost savings of up to $12,000. Wright et al \( (\text{Table } 75) \) described the components of their clinical pathway as:

- Institution of chest physiotherapy
- Patient instruction in the pre-admission testing area \( (\text{opposed to the first visit postoperatively}) \)
- Early discontinuation of prophylactic antibiotics
- Epidural catheters are removed usually the day before the chest tubes are removed so that adequate time is available to adjust to oral analgesic medication
- Improved pain control
- Aggressive nausea control policy
- Printed patient info
- Surgeon-led MDT meetings
Cost savings were mainly attributable to the reduced bed use. Zehrt et al. attributed their reductions in resource use and cost to early mobilisation, prudent use of x-ray & lab analysis, and early post-op extubation. Patton and Schaff tied the following factors contributing to the success of their clinical pathway:

- Close coordination between surgeons and other hospital departments
- Intensive preoperative education to reduce patient anxiety and reduce recovery time
- Patient-controlled analgesia, nerve blocks, non-narcotic analgesia and pre-emptive rehabilitation, which limits the risk of complication
- The use of thoracoscopy to reduce recovery time.

### 6.12 Recommendations

#### 6.12.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations

**Surgical resection is recommended for patients with stage I or II NSCLC who have no medical contraindications and adequate lung function.** (D)

For patients with stage I or II NSCLC who can tolerate lobectomy, lobectomy is the procedure of choice. (C)

Pending further research, patients with stage I or II NSCLC who would not tolerate lobectomy because of comorbid disease or pulmonary compromise should be considered for limited resection or radical radiotherapy. (D)

For all patients with stage I or II NSCLC undergoing surgical resection – usually a lobectomy or a pneumonectomy – clear surgical margins should be the aim. (D(CPPI)

**Sleeve lobectomy offers an acceptable alternative to pneumonectomy for patients with stage I or II NSCLC who have an anatomically appropriate (central) tumour.** This has the advantage of preserving functioning lung. (C)

For patients with T3 NSCLC with chest wall involvement who are undergoing surgery, complete resection of the tumour should be the aim by either extrapleural or en bloc chest wall resection. (C)

All patients undergoing surgical resection for lung cancer should have systematic lymph node sampling to provide accurate pathological staging. (D(CPPI)

In patients with stage IIIA (N2) NSCLC detected through preoperative staging, surgery alone is associated with a relatively poor prognosis. Therefore, these patients should be evaluated by the lung cancer MDT. (D(CPPI)

#### 6.12.2 Research Recommendations

In stage I (IA and IB) NSCLC, further randomised trials on the survival and morbidity after limited resection in comparison to lobar resection for small lung tumours (less than 2 cm) are needed.

In patients with clinical stage I (IA and IB) NSCLC who are suitable for surgical resection, further research on the survival and morbidity after anatomical resection by thoracoscopic techniques in comparison to open resection is needed.

In patients with stage IIIA (N2) NSCLC detected through preoperative staging, surgery alone is associated with a relatively poor prognosis. Research should be conducted in a multidisciplinary setting into the survival and morbidity after surgery alone in comparison with multi-modality treatments.
7 Radical Radiotherapy Alone for Treatment of Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

7.1 Introduction
Radical radiotherapy is external beam radiotherapy delivered to a high dose. This may be delivered “conventionally” in daily 2Gy fractions (treatments) five days per week to a total dose of 60Gy or more, or with radiobiologically equivalent doses using fractions of more than 2Gy per day, for example, in daily fractions of 2.5-2.75Gy to a total dose of 50-55Gy over four weeks. Hyperfractionation refers to the use of two or more fractions daily using fractions of less than 2Gy. Accelerated treatments are those completed in a shorter overall time than conventional treatments.

Increased radiation doses may, in theory, result in both improved tumour control and increased normal tissue damage. The use of techniques to minimise normal tissue damage, particularly lung damage as pneumonitis, may enable a higher dose to be delivered to the tumour. The current standard is to use custom-made lead blocks or a multi-leaf collimator to minimise the dose to adjacent normal tissue in conjunction with three-dimensional (3-D) treatment planning where the target volume is contoured directly onto CT slices. This conformal therapy has now replaced older 2-D CT and non-CT based planning techniques. Newer techniques to improve dose delivery (e.g. intensity-modulated radiotherapy, IMRT, or stereotactic radiotherapy) or which minimise the impact of tumour motion during treatment are under evaluation.

The aim of radical radiotherapy is to obtain control of the primary tumour and involved hilar or mediastinal nodes. In general, the impact of radical radiotherapy on overall survival is less in more advanced disease where the incidence of distant metastases is higher. The risk of lung damage when larger volumes are treated means that there is a limit of tumour bulk above which the risks become unacceptable.

Radical radiotherapy is suitable for treating a wide variety of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) patients. As well as being used alone, it can be used postoperatively or in combination with chemotherapy. Radical radiotherapy may be the treatment of choice for patients where, due to comorbid disease, other types of treatment are not tolerated or where the patient chooses not to have surgery or chemotherapy.

In this chapter, we describe the use of radical radiotherapy where it is the only treatment modality given for patients with NSCLC. Combination treatments (e.g. sequential or concurrent chemoradiotherapy or where radiotherapy is used in combination with surgery) will be discussed in chapter 9. We discuss lower dose (palliative) radiotherapy administered for the relief of symptoms in chapter 12. The chapter is in two parts, reflecting two distinct patient groups, those with stage I and II disease and those with stage III NSCLC, as the prognosis and the approach to treatment differ between these groups.

7.2 Techniques included in this review
In this chapter, we investigated the treatments of NSCLC patients with radical radiotherapy. We searched for literature that provides evidence for the use of radiotherapy alone in treating NSCLC. We did however consider papers that compared the use of two different regimens of radiotherapy, where the same chemotherapy drugs and doses are used in both arms of the trial. We considered all types of fractionation and both conformal and non-conformal techniques.

7.3 Methodology
We excluded papers that reported treatment doses of less than 40Gy, those that only provided evidence on the use of radiotherapy in combination with other treatment modalities and those that included patients without pathologically confirmed NSCLC.

In our initial search, we found a Cochrane Review on radical radiotherapy for stage I/II NSCLC in patients not sufficiently fit for or declining surgery and a systematic review on the use of radical radiotherapy alone for treatment of stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC. The NCC-AC team undertook additional searches to update these reviews.

The search strategy is listed in appendix six.

7.4 Assessment of patients for Radical Radiotherapy
The suitability of patients for radical radiotherapy depends on a number of factors including stage and performance status. The suitability of patients for radical radiotherapy depends on a number of factors including stage and performance status (see appendix 2, Figure 4 for comparison of Karnofsky and WHO/Zubrod performance status scales). Our literature search found no studies or systematic reviews for inclusion on pre-treatment assessment. The guideline development group decided to highlight some good practice points in this area. They considered that it was good practice to ask all patients to undergo pulmonary function tests, including lung volumes and transfer factor, prior to consideration of radical radiotherapy. Although no satisfactory “cut-off” for FEV1 (either as an absolute value or as % predicted) has been established, clinical oncologists recognise the need for caution in those with particularly low FEV1. In practice, patients with an FEV1 <1.0 can be treated with radical radiotherapy provided the amount of normal lung irradiated is small. In the absence of precise limits of lung function or the volume of lung that may safely be irradiated, clinical oncologists exercise clinical judgement in determining where radical radiotherapy may not be appropriate for patients with bulky tumours because of the excessive risk of lung damage. Because it is likely in the future that many screen-detected tumours will be in patients with poor lung function, this topic will become increasingly important and is an area where further research is needed.

7.5 Radical Radiotherapy for Stage I and II Medically Inoperable Non Small Cell Lung Cancer Patients

7.5.1 Introduction
Although surgery offers the best outcome in terms of survival for patients with stage I and II NSCLC (see chapter 6), radical radiotherapy has an important role in the management of medically inoperable patients. The term ‘medically inoperable’ refers to a diverse group of patients who are either considered unfit for surgery (due to insufficient respiratory reserve, cardiovascular disease or general frailty) or who decline surgery.

7.5.2 Effectiveness
We examined the effectiveness of radiotherapy alone in treating stage I and II medically inoperable NSCLC patients. We considered the use of conventional radiotherapy treatment, optimal dose, the volume of chest to be irradiated and the effectiveness of alternative fractionation regimens.

We found no evidence comparing radical radiotherapy to no treatment or palliative radiotherapy, or comparing surgery with radiotherapy. However, one study performed multivariate analysis on data from patients treated in the same centre with radiotherapy or surgery and found that treatment modality did not have an effect on survival (see Table 77).

Survival
Overall survival from a systematic review of data from one randomised and 35 non-randomised retrospective studies (pooled data from 2617 patients) was 70% at one year, 45% at two years, 32% at three years and 17% at five years. Most of these studies used conventional (once daily) fractionation, although five studies used twice-daily fractionation. (Level 2++)
In the absence of randomised trials of radical radiotherapy versus supportive care alone, we obtained indirect evidence of effectiveness from consideration of the natural history of untreated NSCLC. In one study, none of 50 untreated patients with stage I/II NSCLC survived more than three years. The survival figures for radiotherapy are poor in comparison to the five-year survival of patients who are treated with curative surgery alone. In our review (see chapter 6) we found that stage IA, IB, IIA and IIB patients had five-year survival of 69, 52, 45 and 33% respectively, when treated surgically. However, confounding factors need to be taken into account when making comparisons between these two groups. A proportion of patients are upstaged during surgery as the true extent of the disease becomes apparent. Thus, surgical results are based on pathological staging and radiotherapy results are based on clinical staging, whereby a proportion of patients are likely to be ‘under staged’. In addition, the patient groups are not equivalent. Most patients receiving radiotherapy alone were those not fit for surgery and had coexisting medical conditions and/or were in a frail condition. A direct comparison with surgical survival rates is therefore difficult to make.

Stage

The outcomes of treating patients of different stage are reported in a systematic review. The review included thirty-five non-randomised retrospective studies. Weighted overall survival for studies including patients only with stage I NSCLC was 50% at two years and 19% at five years. For studies including patients with stage II or all stages, the weighted overall survival was 39% at two years and 14% at five years. The same systematic review found some evidence, from studies that performed multi- or uni-variate analysis, that patients with smaller tumours have better survival at five years (T1 had better survival than T2 tumours). (Level 2+)

Radiotherapy dose and fractionation

One randomised controlled trial compared the use of continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy (CHART) (54 Gy in 1.5 Gy daily over 12 days) to conventional radiotherapy to 60 Gy (at 2 Gy per day over six weeks). Analysis of stage I and IIA patients showed that two year survival was 37% for CHART and 24% for conventional radiotherapy to 60 Gy. The four year survival was 18% for CHART and 14% for conventional radiotherapy. The results demonstrate that CHART is superior to conventional radiotherapy to 60 Gy for stage I and II NSCLC. (Level 1+)

The evidence also indicates, although not strongly, that higher doses are associated with improved outcome. The recent Cochrane systematic review found better response rates and survival for subgroups of patients treated with higher radiation dose compared to those receiving a lower dose, although the reason for the choice of dose was rarely stated in these non-randomised trials (Level 2++). It is possible that less fit patients or those with more advanced disease may have received a lower dose.

Although most reported studies of once daily fractionation have used 2 Gy fractions to total doses of 60 Gy or greater, the fractionation most commonly used in the UK for stage I/II NSCLC is 55 Gy in 20 fractions over 4 weeks. This is believed by most oncologists to be biologically equivalent to a dose of approximately 64 Gy in 32 fractions over 6½ weeks.

Overall treatment time

A retrospective study of the effect of overall treatment time found that protracted treatment times were associated with significantly poorer (p<0.0002) two-year local progression free survival, for a group of N0 and N1 patients (Level 2+).

Mediastinal irradiation

The Cochrane review found no clear evidence to support routine irradiation of the mediastinum. Studies of the stage I patients who had not received irradiation of the mediastinum found that isolated regional relapse was uncommon (0-3%). In addition, one study in the review did not find a significant effect on survival if the mediastinum had been irradiated in stage II patients (see Table 77) (Level 2+).

Performance Status

In the systematic review by Rowell and Williams, the majority of patients in the studies were of good performance status (WHO O-1 or Karnofsky 70-100).

Comparisons, in three studies with adequate data, showed that the median survival time was lower in patients with poor performance status. This was confirmed by multivariate analysis in two studies. One further study in the review found no difference in survival by performance status. Although there is little data on patients with poor performance status, and that this data is at times conflicting, overall, patients with poor performance status had a worse outcome. Overall, there is insufficient data on patients with PS 2 to support a recommendation for radical radiotherapy (Level 2++)

Weight Loss

Weight loss prior to treatment is associated with poorer outcome. Two studies within the systematic review found survival was adversely affected by weight loss whilst one study reported that survival was unaffected (Level 2++)

Age

The evidence for the effect of age on the outcome after radical radiotherapy is conflicting. Most studies however, do not show an adverse effect of age (Level 2+).

7.5.3 Morbidity and Quality of Life

Radiotherapy can cause pulmonary toxicity leading to early acute pneumonitis (occasionally fatal) or development of chronic pulmonary fibrosis. Oesophagitis is common when the mediastinum is included in the treatment volume. Patients receiving radiotherapy may also experience skin reactions, pericarditis and late oesophageal strictures. There is however a lack of documented evidence on treatment related morbidity and quality of life. Reporting of these outcomes was either poor and inconsistent, in studies included in the systematic review, or did not break the results down for stage I and II patients. A cohort study of 46 stage I medically inoperable patients reported a gradual increase in dyspnoea and a significant deterioration of general symptoms including fatigue and appetite loss after radiotherapy (Level 2+).

7.5.4 Patient Eligibility

The systematic review by Rowell and Williams collated the results of 35 non-randomised trials and found that there is a benefit in treating medically inoperable stage I and II NSCLC patients with radical radiotherapy (Level 2++). The review also found no benefit of age as a relative contra-indication. Age per se should not influence a decision to offer radical radiotherapy.

7.5.5 Conclusions

The systematic review by Rowell and Williams collated the results of 35 non-randomised trials and found that there is a benefit in treating medically inoperable stage I and II NSCLC patients with radical radiotherapy (Level 2++). The review also found no benefit of age as a relative contra-indication. Age per se should not influence a decision to offer radical radiotherapy. The frequent attendance of patients receiving radical radiotherapy is conflicting. Most studies however, do not show an adverse effect of age (Level 2+).

7.6 Treatment of Stage IIIA and IIB Non Small Cell Lung Cancer patients

7.6.1 Introduction

Untreated stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC patients have a poor prognosis. In this section we examined the effectiveness of treatment with radical radiotherapy alone in stage III NSCLC patients. The suitability of different patient groups for this treatment and the associated morbidity.

Some of the studies included in this section include a small number of stage I and II patients. Although...
the data for these patients cannot be separated the numbers are small and the effect on the results is unlikely to be significant.

7.6.2 Effectiveness
We examined the effectiveness of radiotherapy alone in treating stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC patients. We considered the use of conventional radiotherapy treatment, evidence for the optimal dose, the volume of chest to be irradiated and the effectiveness of alternative treatment regimens including hyperfractionation and continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy (CHART).

We identified a systematic review\textsuperscript{48} that included seven randomised controlled trials of over 100 patients\textsuperscript{286,287,288}. We found no more recent studies with over 100 patients to update this review. The two-year survival for patients with stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC treated with conventional radiotherapy (i.e. 5 fractions per week, 1.8-2Gy per day to a total dose of 60Gy or equivalent) ranges from 12.5% to 24% (Table 78) (Level 1+).

We identified no trials that compared the use of radiotherapy with no treatment or active supportive care. However, a systematic review that examined the natural history of NSCLC, found that two year survival ranged between 0-4% for untreated stage disease.\textsuperscript{293}

Table 78 shows that two-year survival ranged between 0-4% for untreated stage disease.\textsuperscript{293} We found that evidence of conventional radiotherapy in treating stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC treated with conventional radiotherapy (i.e. 5 fractions per week, 1.8-2Gy per day to a total dose of 60Gy or equivalent) ranges from 12.5% to 24% (Table 78) (Level 1+).

We examined the effectiveness of conventional radiotherapy and survival of one schedule over the other (OR 0.67 in favour of hyperfractionated radiotherapy, p<0.001)\textsuperscript{49} (Table 81) (Level 1+).

We examined the effectiveness of conventional radiotherapy and survival of one schedule over the other (OR 0.67 in favour of hyperfractionated radiotherapy, p<0.001)\textsuperscript{49} (Table 81) (Level 1+). Cox et al\textsuperscript{50} examined doses between 60Gy conventionally fractionated and doses between 64.8Gy and 79.2Gy treating twice daily. They found no statistically significant difference to indicate a consistent survival advantage with increasing dose. However, they found 69.6Gy to be superior to 60Gy in stage III patients with good performance status and without weight loss. Higher doses offered no further improvements in survival (Table 81) (Level 1+).

A study by the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG) and the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG)\textsuperscript{51} observed better survival in the hyperfractionated arm of the study than in the conventional radiotherapy arm, although the difference was not statistically significant (Level 1+). Patients were only included if they had minimum weight loss and a Karnofsky performance status >70 (Table 81). A randomised study comparing the use of conventional radiotherapy (60Gy at 2Gy per day over six weeks) to CHART (54Gy at 1.5Gy three times daily over 12 days) in 513 patients found that CHART gave better local tumour control and survival\textsuperscript{52} (Table 81). Two-year survival improved from 21% to 30% with CHART. Subgroup analysis indicated that the benefit from CHART was confined to the group with squamous histology (two-year survival improved from 20% to 33%) (Level 1+).

The CHART/WEL (CHART- Week End Less) regimen has been designed to allow treatment to be carried out only during the week. Two-year local control rates were 37% and 55% in sequential groups treated with CHART/WEL 54Gy and 60Gy (without neoadjuvant chemotherapy)\textsuperscript{53}; this compared favourably to the two year local control rate of 23% seen in the CHART arm of the CHART trial\textsuperscript{54}.

We found little evidence on the relationship between performance status and outcome as many studies required good performance status (WHO PS 0-1) for study entry (e.g. Saunders 1999\textsuperscript{55}; Saunders 2002\textsuperscript{56}; Saute 2000\textsuperscript{57}). Two studies that performed a retrospective multivariate analysis of randomised controlled trials found that performance status was a major independent prognostic factor in patients with locally advanced NSCLC who are treated with radiotherapy\textsuperscript{58,59} (Table 83) (Level 2+).

7.6.3 Morbidity and quality of life
Radiotherapy can cause pulmonary toxicity leading to early acute pneumonitis (occasionally fatal) or development of chronic pulmonary fibrosis. Oesophaegitis is common when the mediastinum is included in the treatment volume. Skin reactions, pericarditis and late oesophaegal strictures are also recorded.

We found only one study (Table 84) that examined quality of life before, during and after radical radiotherapy. The study noted improvement in quality of life in 33% of patients and a worsening in 24%. However, a significant gradual decrease in the mean quality of life score was found over the 12 month follow up (p=0.021)\textsuperscript{60} (Level 2+).

7.6.4 Patient Eligibility
Many stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC patients will have combination treatment, but radiotherapy alone is useful for those patients of good performance who do not wish to have chemotherapy or those who may not be able to tolerate chemotherapy, for example if they have comorbid conditions.

From the evidence presented above, radical radiotherapy is not recommended for those with poor performance status (WHO >2). Weight loss is a relative contra-indication.
### 7.6.5 Conclusion

It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of using radiotherapy alone to treat stage IIA and III NSCLC because there is a lack of evidence comparing radiotherapy alone with best supportive care or with other treatment modalities. However, comparing the survival figures of stage III patients treated with radiotherapy alone to those from studies of the natural history of untreated NSCLC, it appears that the use of radical radiotherapy alone can provide some survival benefit. Although this section considers radical radiotherapy alone, the majority of patients considered sufficiently fit for radiotherapy will also receive chemotherapy (section 5.9).

The overall two year survival for stage IIA and III patients ranges between 12.5%-24% (Level 1+). Stage III patients and those with poor performance status are less likely to do well treated with radiotherapy alone (Level 1+). There is no strong evidence about the optimal radiation dose but (as in section 7.5) there is evidence that CHART is more effective than conventional radiotherapy to 60Gy (Level 1++). Where CHART is not available, conventional radiotherapy to a dose of 64-66Gy in 32-33 fractions over 6 1/2 weeks or 55Gy in 20 fractions over 4 weeks should be considered.

### 7.7 Economics of Radical Radiotherapy for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

#### 7.7.1 Introduction

For certain patient groups, radical radiotherapy offers advantages to patients in terms of improved life expectancy and quality of life. The disadvantages of this management strategy are the associated side effects and the cost of the resources (staff, equipment and consumables). These resources could potentially be put towards alternative beneficial uses; therefore it is important to assess whether the health gains are large enough to justify the cost.

#### 7.7.2 CHART versus conventional radiotherapy

Coyle and Drummond310 carried out a cost analysis alongside the multi-centre randomised controlled trial reported by Saunders et al311. The trial compared CHART with conventional radiotherapy to 60Gy. Resource use and cost data were collected prospectively over three months for 284 patients in 10 UK trial centres. The patients had NSCLC stages I-III.

Table 85 shows the resource usage recorded and Table 86 the associated cost. CHART required more out-of-hours radiotherapy than conventional RT and patients spent more time in hospital, while patients receiving conventional RT spent more time travelling (costs have been inflated to 2002 prices using the Hospital and Community Health Services pay and prices index312). Radiotherapy was more costly in the CHART arm. Cost savings from reduced use of ambulances largely offset the increased inpatient costs associated with CHART. Overall, CHART cost an extra £900 per patient.

Coyle and Drummond310 did not attempt to estimate the incremental cost-effectiveness of CHART, so for this guideline an approximate measure of cost-effectiveness was derived as follows. Table 87 shows the two year survival figures reported by Saunders et al311. We derived figures for life expectancy from the two year survival figures using the Declining Exponential Approximation of Life Expectancy (DEALE) method313,314, which assumes a constant death rate in each arm. This gives an estimate of 0.4 life-years gained per patient at a cost of £2,100 per life-year gained.

The trial did not indicate substantial differences in quality of life between arms overall – some symptoms were worse in the CHART arm but by 6 weeks CHART patients were doing better. Assuming health-related quality of life (HRQL) over the remaining lifetime is on average 60% of full health (see appendix four) this would suggest an incremental cost-effectiveness of £3,500 per QALY, well below the £30,000 per QALY gained threshold. Table 88 shows a sensitivity analysis. Even when making fairly extreme assumptions (lower 95% CI for QALY gained, upper 95% CI for cost and only 40% HRQL the cost per QALY gained is still below £30,000.

Coyle and Drummond310 suggest that the costs of CHART could be substantially reduced if more use was made of hostel accommodation instead of wards. Also, centres with slightly longer standard working hours might be able to reduce costs by carrying out more CHART within ‘normal’ working hours.

Subsequent to conducting this analysis, we identified a study that performed similar calculations. Wake et al315 calculated a substantially higher figure £11,227 per LY gained. This figure is not accurate because a) the life-years gained was approximated by assuming it to be the difference in median survival and b) they assumed that the annual incremental cost would be four times the size of that observed in three months, whereas the time horizon was chosen in order to capture the vast majority of the cost differences. Wake et al considered other strategies, including combination therapy, hence this study is appraised in Chapter 9 on combination therapy for NSCLC.

#### 7.7.3 Conformal radiotherapy

Conformal radiotherapy can potentially improve patient outcomes by better targeting of radiation to the malignant tissue. Holenborg and Sedlmayr316 compared, retrospectively, the costs of 3-D-conformal radiotherapy and radiotherapy without the use of a multileaf collimator for patients with non-small cell lung cancer in three Austrian hospitals (results reported in English by Horwitz317). They found conformal radiotherapy to be more costly – see Table 89 (costs have been converted from Austrian Schillings using purchasing power parities). The increased costs were due to the need for:

- more expensive linear accelerator equipment;
- additional time for CT localisation & planning; and
- additional time for patient positioning and verification.

#### 7.7.4 Economics conclusions and discussion

CHART appears to be more costly than conventional radical radiotherapy to 60Gy but relatively cost-effective. The evidence for this is relatively strong with both resource use and survival data coming from a multi-centre RCT set in the UK NHS. There is no direct evidence for lung cancer patients that either strategy is cost-effective compared with best supportive care (i.e. no radiotherapy); however, Glazelbrook318 and Barton et al319 have found radiotherapy generally to be highly cost-effective. If we assume that conventional radical radiotherapy for lung cancer is cost-effective then it would appear that CHART is the strategy of choice in relevant patient groups (although there could be other fractionation strategies that are just as cost-effective but have not yet been evaluated). Implementation of CHART would require greater use of out-of-hours radiotherapy machines and bed usage. However, the number of patients that would require this treatment is not that great. The cost of CHART could be reduced if more CHART is performed during normal working hours and if hostel accommodation is used instead of ward beds. CHART is likely to be relatively more effective and cost-effective in patients at earlier stages of disease. Dale and Jones312 use a radiobiological model to show that in the long term non-standard fractionation could actually reduce costs by preventing recurrence of disease.

A study showed that conformal radiotherapy is more costly than radiotherapy without multileaf collimation. Conformal radiotherapy could still potentially be cost-effective, if there are health gains, but as yet, there is no direct evidence of health improvements. Conformal radiotherapy has become the standard since this study was conducted.

#### 7.8 Conclusion

Radical radiotherapy is indicated for stage I, II and III patients of good performance status (WHO 0-1) whose disease can be encompassed in a radiotherapy treatment volume without undue risk of normal tissue damage. Contra-indications to radical radiotherapy include pericardial effusions, cytologically positive pleural effusions and supraclavicular nodes. Contralateral hilar or contralateral mediastinal nodes are relative contra-indications for stage III NSCLC.
8 Chemotherapy for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

8.1 Introduction
Stage IIIb or IV non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is generally not considered to be curable, with five-year survival rates of less than 1%. However, chemotherapy can be useful in improving symptoms and quality of life in these patients. Chemotherapy also improves survival and although the increase is modest, it must be considered alongside the poor life expectancy in this group. The benefits must be carefully weighed against the risks of toxicity for the individual patient.

There is the possibility of treating patients with first, second and even third line systemic treatment, although many NSCLC patients treated with chemotherapy will only be suitable for first line treatment.

The Guideline Development Group decided to use the term ‘active supportive care’ (ASC) rather than ‘best supportive care’ (BSC) in this document to emphasise the nature of the care as an active process including other treatments such as radiotherapy. However, many trials use the term BSC and our evidence tables reflect this.

The development of this chapter included a review and update of the following technology appraisal.

8.2 The drugs included in this review
This review updates the Cochrane review[^25] (2000) and the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) report[^26] published in 2001, in addition to addressing other clinical questions. We therefore include data on the second generation drugs; cisplatin and carboplatin (platinums), ifosfamide, vinblastine, vindesine and mitomycin C. The HTA report examined four third generation chemotherapy drugs (docetaxel, paclitaxel, gemcitabine and vinorelbine) in the treatment of NSCLC. Since the HTA report was published docetaxel has been granted a licence to be used as first line therapy in the UK, and we have therefore looked for new evidence for its use in first and second line treatment.

Our review excludes new cytotoxic or biologically targeted agents, which were not licensed for use in the UK at the cut-off date for the literature search.

8.3 Methodology
Studies undertaken and completed after the publication of Detterbeck[^23] and Health Technology Assessment 2001[^24] by NICE were included.

The literature search identified a number of previous systematic reviews on chemotherapy for NSCLC. These included: Socinski et al[^27], Health Technology Assessment[^28,29], two Cochrane reviews[^30,31] and Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guideline Initiative[^32,33].

Additional studies were found by the literature search. The inclusion criteria for studies was as follows:

> All studies had to be randomised control trials in NSCLC
> Studies not covered by Detterbeck 2001 and the HTA report 2001
> Not covered by Cochrane 2000 and 2002 reviews
8.4 Patient Eligibility

In late stage NSCLC, chemotherapy offers the patient the possibility of symptom relief, improved disease control, better quality of life (QoL) and increased survival. However, not all patients with advanced disease (stage IIIb and IV) are fit enough to receive systemic treatment. In less fit patients, the risks of toxicity may outweigh the potential benefits of chemotherapy. In 2001 NICE estimated that between 1,320 and 5,280 lung cancer patients received chemotherapy each year, but the Royal College of Physicians estimates that over 16,000 NSCLC patients a year are eligible for chemotherapy.

A recent systematic review, which summarised prognostic factors from 12,419 patients in ten trials of chemotherapy for NSCLC identified performance status (PS) to be the most important factor in the selection of patients for systemic treatment (Level 1+). The more recent trial (Spiro et al, 2003) included. The authors concluded that, in terms of platinum based chemotherapy increases median survival (by approximately 9 weeks) (Level 1+). This updated the HTA review, which had found evidence of gains in quality of life, compared to ASC, for the third generation drugs, when used in NSCLC patients with good performance status. Our search identified a further randomised trial. The results were consistent with the earlier findings showing increases in median survival of 7-8 weeks (Level 1+). The later randomised trials of single third generation drugs in their review also showed increases in median survival of 7-8 weeks (Level 1+). The HTA review included the three suitable studies and our literature search identified three further studies (reported in four papers) which randomised patients to be eligible for chemotherapy.

8.5 Chemotherapy + Active Supportive Care (ASC) versus ASC

A systematic review undertaken by Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guideline Initiative (whose evidence base included four meta-analyses and eight randomised trials) concluded that there is a modest survival benefit (ranging between 1.8 and 4.5 months) for platinum based chemotherapy plus ASC over ASC alone in the treatment of advanced NSCLC (Level 1+). The later randomised trials of single third generation drugs in their review also showed increases in median survival of 7-8 weeks (Level 1+). The HTA review included the three suitable studies and our literature search identified three further studies (reported in four papers) which randomised patients to be eligible for chemotherapy.

8.6 Second Generation versus Third Generation Regimens

Second generation chemotherapy agents include ifosfamide, vinblastine, vindesine, mitomycin C and platinums (carboplatin and cisplatin). The platinums have become commonly used in the treatment of lung cancer and are associated with side effects including nausea, vomiting and myelosuppression. Administration of antiemetics and IV fluids can reduce the incidence of some of these side effects and can make the administration of such agents more tolerable. More recently, the third generation drugs (gemcitabine, paclitaxel, vinorelbine and docetaxel) have been shown to have significant activity against NSCLC, alone or in combination. This section will review the evidence comparing third generation drugs (either singly or in combination) versus a second generation drug (or second generation drugs in combination).

The HTA review included three suitable studies and our literature search identified three further studies (reported in four papers) which randomised one group of patients to a regimen comprising second generation agents and one group to a third generation regimen. In all the trials the platinum based regimens used cisplatin plus another third generation drug in comparison to a third generation drug. There was good homogeneity within the patient selection for the trials. In terms of clinical effectiveness, differences in one year survival rate and median survival did not reach statistical significance (Level 1+). Few trials reported toxicity in detail, see Table 92.

8.8 Third generation chemotherapy treatment

8.8.1 Different combinations of third generation drugs + Platinums

We identified six recent randomised trials plus one study included in the HTA systematic review assessing different combinations of third generation drugs with a platinum as first line treatment for advanced NSCLC.

The trials compared a range of regimens and although some combinations were superior within trials, the levels of outcomes obtained were not consistent across trials. Where similar combinations appear in different trials (albeit with different dosages) the range of response rates and survival across the trials is larger than that observed within trials (see Table 94). There is, therefore, no strong evidence that one regimen is superior over any other.

Higher response rates do not necessarily translate into improved survival in these trials. Toxicity analyses were
similarly complex, reflecting the known profiles of the agents' side effects. Details of specific endpoints are in Table 94. Two trials reported (non-clinical) quality of life but did not detect differences that reached statistical significance.

The HTA report concluded that it was likely that the optimal treatment is a third generation drug (gemcitabine, paclitaxel or vinorelbine) in combination with a platinum based drug (cisplatin, carboplatin). The Guideline Development Group agreed with this, with the addition of docetaxel, and decided to make this a good practice point. However, there is insufficient evidence that any one particular combination is superior to another (Level 1+).

### 8.8.2 Three drugs versus two drugs combinations

Triplet chemotherapy regimens, either platinum or non-platinum based have been tested in phase I and II studies. However, it is difficult to compare effectiveness as different combinations of agents and different dosages are assessed in each trial. There are concerns about excessive toxicity that need addressing through phase III studies.

Our review is based on the relevant trials from the HTA review337,342,355,359-361 (Table 96). Only two of the trials detected a significant difference in response between third generation agents with or without platinum in various combinations (Level 1+). None detected a difference in survival (Level 1+). Only two of the studies examined quality of life338,340 neither detecting significant differences between the different regimens (Level 1+).

Toxicity reflected the agents' known profiles and is described in detail in Table 96.

### 8.8.3 Third generation drugs + Platinums vs. Third generation drugs + Non platinums

Before the advent of the third generation drugs for NSCLC, platinum based chemotherapy was the standard of care. We reviewed the evidence to assess the effectiveness of third generation drugs in combination, to replace the platinum. Comparisons of a platinum based regimen that includes one of the third generation drugs compared with third generation drug alone have yielded conflicting results.

Our search identified two relevant trials338,340 within the HTA review and six more recent randomised trials338,340,338,340,360 (Table 96). Only two of the trials detected a significant difference in response between third generation agents with or without platinum in various combinations (Level 1+). None detected a difference in survival (Level 1+).

Toxicities occurred in the frequencies anticipated from agents' known profiles and are reported in Table 96.

### 8.9 Duration of therapy in advanced Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

The optimal duration of therapy in patients with advanced NSCLC has not yet been identified. Many patients with advanced NSCLC have co-morbidities which adversely affect their performance status and tolerance of chemotherapy. In recent phase III randomised trials of combination therapy, the typical median number of cisplatin or carboplatin based chemotherapy cycles delivered is three or four as any additional cycles result in cumulative toxicity experienced. There have been various strategies used to determine the number of chemotherapy cycles for advanced NSCLC: treat until progression; treat for two cycles beyond maximal response; or treat for a defined number of cycles- usually six to eight.

We identified two recent randomised trials assessing duration of treatment338,340 (See Table 97). One of the later randomised trials338 compared a defined duration of therapy versus continuous therapy followed by second-line therapy in advanced-stage IIIIB/IV non-small cell lung cancer. In this trial, 230 patients were randomised to receive either four cycles of carboplatin and paclitaxel every 3 weeks (Arm A) or identical doses of carboplatin and paclitaxel every 3 weeks until progression (Arm B). In both arms, patients received weekly paclitaxel of 80mg/m2 at progression. Patients in Arm B received between 0-15 cycles of chemotherapy, but the median number of cycles received in both groups was 4 because of disease progression or the patient’s inability to tolerate further chemotherapy. In the second trial342,346 306 patients were randomised to receive either six or three cycles of mitomycin, vinblastine and cisplatin every 21 days. However, the median number of cycles administered was 4 and 3 respectively. There was no difference in tumour response or survival in either trial. Toxicity reflected the agents known profiles and is reported in Table 97.

The first trial346 found no difference in quality of life between the two arms. The second trial342 found quality of life improves for those randomised to receive three rather than four cycles.

The majority of patients within these trials to determine the optimum number of cycles of chemotherapy either did not have a major response to treatment or were unable to tolerate more than three or four cycles (Level 1+). As the trials were not able to answer the more specific question of whether patients who are responding to chemotherapy, and tolerating chemotherapy well, benefit from treatment beyond three to four cycles, the evidence on the duration of treatment remains inconclusive.

### 8.10 Dosage of chemotherapy treatment

We were not able to identify evidence that specifically examined this issue. A wide range of cisplatin doses have been used, but good comparative data are not currently available. There is a need for research to identify optimum dosage of chemotherapeutic agents.

### 8.11 Second-line chemotherapy in Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

Second-line chemotherapy has only recently been tested in randomised trials. The role of second-line treatment has been unclear because few patients have adequate performance status and survival is limited.

We identified a Cochrane review containing one randomised trial, comparing docetaxel with ASC325, which was also included in the HTA review325, and a further randomised trial332 comparing docetaxel and paclitaxel for this group of patients (see Table 98). The trial in the Cochrane review325 and HTA review332 randomised 204 non-small cell lung cancer patients to receive either docetaxel or active supportive care. The dose of docetaxel was reduced from 100 mg/m2 to 75 mg/m2 following an unacceptably high toxic death rate in the initial patients. The second line tumour response rate was 5.8% in the chemotherapy treated patients as compared to nil in the active supportive care group of patients325 (Level 1+). The median survival was 4.6 months for patients given active supportive care when compared with 7 months for the chemotherapy group and 1 year survival was 19% in the active supportive care group and 29% in the chemotherapy group325 (Level 1+). All quality of life parameters favoured the docetaxel arm, the differences in pain and fatigue experienced reached statistical significance325. The later trial, which compared docetaxel and paclitaxel for patients who had previously received platinum based chemotherapy and had a life expectancy of at least 12 weeks, reported median survival of 184 and 105 days respectively.

Toxicities occurred in the frequencies anticipated from agents' known profiles and are reported in Table 98.

### 8.12 Economics of chemotherapy for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer.

Chemotherapy can potentially improve survival, reduce symptoms, improve quality of life and lead to a reduction in healthcare costs (e.g. terminal care, radiotherapy costs). However these advantages have to be weighed against the additional costs of chemotherapy, which include the cost of drugs, supportive medications, administration and chemotherapy-related toxicity.
conducted in the UK and the rest were conducted in Canada (Table 99 and Table 100). Maslove et al.377 carried out a retrospective cost analysis of 194 NSCLC patients from eight UK centres included in the Big Lung Trail 377. The trial compared three courses of cisplatin-based chemotherapy plus best supportive care with best supportive care alone in patients with advanced disease. The costs were followed-up to death. They mean aggregate episode cost was significantly higher for chemotherapy patients compared to patients receiving BSC. However, the mean costs for all resources except those related to chemotherapy administration were not significantly different indicating that the resource impact of chemotherapy-related toxicity did not differ significantly between the two groups. The mean weekly cost was similar between the two patient groups suggesting that the additional costs for chemotherapy patients related to them having longer intervention episodes.

Chemotherapy patients were 5.2 times more likely than BSC patients to be hospitalised during their episode (p<0.001) and had more out-patient attendances (p<0.001). Patients randomised to BSC alone were more likely to have had radiotherapy (odds ratio 0.51, p=0.022). The study did not report effectiveness, however Maslove (2001)366, suggests that chemotherapy patients incur a cost of about £300 per extra week of survival, which is equivalent to £15,600 per LY gained.

Billingham et al.378 assessed the cost-effectiveness of mitomycin, ifosfamide and cisplatin plus palliative care versus palliative care. The study was a retrospective study of a subset of patients (116, South Birmingham) from the randomised MIC2 trial. The study, which followed-up costs to death, demonstrated that MIC increased survival by 2.4 months at an incremental cost of £2,924, which translates into an incremental cost-effectiveness ratio of £14,620 per LY gained (95% CI: £6168-£21,612). The MIC2 trial also reported that this survival gain was achieved without compromising patient’s quality of life.

Clegg et al.379, for the Health Technology Assessment Report, developed three UK economic models to compare the cost-effectiveness of four chemotherapy regimens (paclitaxel, docetaxel, gemcitabine and vinorelbine, all with or without cisplatin) with BSC using a synthesis of relevant trial data and a number of different sources of resource use and cost data. Results here relate to the third modelling approach used (cost-effectiveness analysis versus BSC). The results and limitations of the first two models are outlined in Clegg et al.380.

Costs were followed-up to death. The regimens with the least incremental cost-effectiveness ratios versus BSC are vinorelbine, vinorelbine + cisplatin and gemcitabine. Gemcitabine + cisplatin and paclitaxel + cisplatin show reasonable cost-effectiveness. All these regimens retain their cost-effectiveness under a number of scenarios and assumptions tested in the sensitivity analysis. However, the single agents paclitaxel and docetaxel have relatively high cost-effectiveness ratios. The sensitivity analysis examined the effect of different scenarios on the cost-effectiveness results. It tested number of cycles, % patients not completing cycles, number of administrations, drug costs, reduced dose, cost of antiepatic drugs, BSC cost, use of mean survival rates rather than median, quality of life adjustment, outpatient administration and survival. The results were most sensitive to changes in survival. The quality of life adjustment used utility values derived by Berthelot et al.381. The incremental cost per quality adjusted life years (QALYs) for those regimens that utility values were available for slightly increased cost-effectiveness in all cases except one. Clegg et al.379 also considered quantitative information on the relative quality of life impact of chemotherapy regimens and BSC. Their overall conclusions were that chemotherapy for NSCLC is cost-effective taking into account both survival and quality of life.

Lees et al.382 compared the cost-effectiveness of gemcitabine plus BSC versus BSC using the perspective of the UK NHS. The study used data collected in a RCT of 300 patients and assumed that gemcitabine was administered in an outpatient basis. The trial was designed to measure quality of life, not survival, and therefore the results are presented as a cost per progression-free survival where progression relates to time to radiotherapy. Costs were not followed-up to death. The study reported that gemcitabine + BCS was associated with an incremental cost per progression-free LY gained of £5,228 compared to BSC alone.

The remaining six studies were conducted in Canada. Four of these studies are based on the same economic model framework374,375,376,377,378 and two are retrospective analyses of an old (1984) Canadian RCT.375,376 A wide range of regimens were considered. In terms of incremental cost-effectiveness versus BSC all estimates were below $20,000 (Canadian dollars) and in some cases chemotherapy was the dominant strategy (increased effectiveness at reduced costs). In terms of incremental QALYs, only two studies included a quality adjustment, and they presented very different results. Berthelot et al.379 found that quality adjusting LYs gained increased the cost-effectiveness ratio by about 50%, but regimens remained relatively cost-effective versus BSC (range: Vinblastine + cisplatin dominated BSC to paclitaxel (135) + cisplatin = $21,500 per QALY gained). However, Kennedy et al.375 found that BSC was the dominant strategy in terms of cost per QALY gained. This was mainly due to the divergence of utility values used for the studies. Kennedy et al.375 used mean utility values of 0.34 for chemotherapy and 0.61 for BSC whereas Berthelot et al.379 used 0.52 to 0.63 for chemotherapy (depending on regimen) and 0.53 for BSC.

8.12.2 Chemotherapy versus chemotherapy 1st line

We identified and tabulated 18 economic evaluations that compared two or more chemotherapy regimens. Only one of the studies was conducted from the perspective of the UK NHS (Table 101 and Table 102).

> Three of the studies assessed cost-effectiveness in terms of incremental cost per LY gained (Table 103):

Earle and Evans383 used an economic model framework to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of paclitaxel + cisplatin versus etoposide + cisplatin. The incremental cost-effectiveness ratios ranged from $30,619 to $138,578 per LY gained depending on location of administration of paclitaxel (inpatient or outpatient) and the addition of a growth-colony stimulating factor (G-CSF). Evans383 used the same economic model framework to assess the cost-effectiveness of vinorelbine with or without cisplatin versus etoposide + cisplatin and vinblastine + cisplatin. Again the cost-effectiveness ratios varied widely depending on the location of administration of vinorelbine and the addition of cisplatin to vinorelbine. The third study, Smith et al.384, used effectiveness data from a European RCT and applied US costs to estimate the cost-effectiveness of vinorelbine + cisplatin versus vinorelbine + cisplatin. The resulting incremental cost-effectiveness ratio was $15,500 per LY gained and $25,800 per QALY gained. Smith 1995 did not assess costs to death. It is not clear for the other two studies whether lifetime costs were assessed or not.

> Three of the studies also assessed cost-effectiveness, but used different effectiveness endpoints:

A UK study385 evaluated the cost-effectiveness of gemcitabine + cisplatin compared to a number of other newer and older chemotherapy regimens. For all these comparisons data on effectiveness were derived from relevant RCTs and resource use and cost data were derived from a number of different sources. A number of assumptions with regard to resource use had to be made. The results suggest that gemcitabine + cisplatin is more costly with improved effectiveness compared to older chemotherapy regimens (etoposide + cisplatin, MIC, MVP) and is the dominant strategy (more effective, reduced costs) compared to other newer chemotherapy regimens (paclitaxel + cisplatin, paclitaxel + carboplatin, docetaxel + cisplatin, vinorelbine + cisplatin). It is unclear whether costs were followed-up to death. Annemans et al.386, compared the cost per responder between paclitaxel + cisplatin and teniposide + cisplatin in four countries. The study found that the average cost-effectiveness ratios for the two groups were similar despite the high cost of chemotherapy drug cost in the paclitaxel arm. This was because the high drug cost was partly outweighed by lower hospitalisation costs for administration and lower chemotherapy-related toxicity costs. The study did not follow-up costs to death and assumed certain costs to be equal between the two groups.

The third study, Palmer and Brant387, was a cost-effectiveness study of four cisplatin-based chemotherapy regimens (gemcitabine, vinorelbine, etoposide and mitomycin = ifosfamide). Average cost-effectiveness ratios (cost per tumour response)
were not statistically different between the four treatment groups. Gemcitabine + cisplatin had the most favourable cost–effectiveness ratio. Costs were not followed up to death.

> The final 12 studies were cost-minimisation studies or cost analyses:

Ramsey et al381 conducted a cost-minimisation analysis using data collected prospectively in a RCT of paclitaxel + carboplatin versus vinorelbine + cisplatin. There was no statistically significant difference in survival or cancer-related quality of life between the treatment arms. The mean lifetime cancer-related health care cost for the vinorelbine + cisplatin group was significantly lower than for the paclitaxel + carboplatin group ($40,292 versus $48,940, P=0.004). The mean difference was $8,648 (95% CI=$2,634 to $14,662). The majority of this difference was due to the higher cost of chemotherapy drugs in the paclitaxel arm. There were no notable differences in downstream costs. The chemotherapy drug cost and medical procedures cost was significantly higher in the paclitaxel arm (p<0.0003 and p<0.0001 respectively) and the chemotherapy administration costs were significantly higher in the vinorelbine arm (p=0.0001).

Rubio-Terres et al383 conducted a cost-minimisation analysis of docetaxel+ cisplatin, paclitaxel + cisplatin and paclitaxel + carboplatin. Equivalent efficacy was demonstrated in a RCT. An economic model was constructed to estimate the treatment cost per patient over a median of 4 cycles (no follow-up of costs to death). The mean treatment cost for the docetaxel + cisplatin regimen was lower than that for the paclitaxel regimen. Statistical significance for the difference was not tested. The difference was mainly due to the lower cost of chemotherapy drugs in the docetaxel arm.

Chen et al385, in a cost-minimisation analysis, also found that chemotherapy drug cost was responsible for the difference in treatment costs between paclitaxel + carboplatin and paclitaxel + gemcitabine. Gemcitabine plus cisplatin had the most favourable cost–effectiveness ratio. Costs were not followed up to death. Total treatment costs and chemotherapy drug costs were significantly higher for the paclitaxel + gemcitabine arm (p=0.034 and p=0.035 respectively).

Skowron et al384, in a cost analysis, found that chemotherapy drug cost and in-patient administration cost constituted the highest cost component of chemotherapy in a retrospective cost analysis of 87 patients undergoing etoposide + cisplatin or vinorelbine + cisplatin or gemcitabine + cisplatin. No statistically significant difference was found in one year survival between the three groups. Chemotherapy cost was the highest cost component in the gemcitabine + cisplatin group and the cost of administration was the highest cost component in the other two treatment groups. However a number of important costs were not included in the study including a follow-up of costs to death and chemotherapy-related toxicity costs.

Khan et al382, in a prospective cost-minimisation study comparing carboplatin and cisplatin (+/- other chemotherapy regimens) found that the cost per patient and cost per course was higher for carboplatin than for cisplatin (statistical significance not tested). This difference was predominantly due to the higher cost of carboplatin. Again, costs were not follow-up to death and some cost elements were excluded.

Vergnenegre et al386, in a prospective study found that effectiveness, in terms of objective response rate, was similar between two chemotherapy treatment groups (mitomycin + vinorelbine + cisplatin versus mitomycin + vindesine + cisplatin). Mean cost per patient for 3 cycles of chemotherapy were also similar. Costs were not followed up to death.

The five studies that are gemcitabine cost-minimisation studies are either authored or supported by the producer of gemcitabine. Four of the studies were economic models using efficacy data from relevant RCTs and supplemented by expert opinion385-388. Costs were not followed up to death and critically a number of assumptions had to be made. It was assumed that gemcitabine would be administered on an outpatient basis and the cost of gemcitabine was either assumed or excluded from the analysis altogether. The fifth study389 was a cost-minimisation study comparing gemcitabine + cisplatin versus etoposide + cisplatin. Efficacy and resource use data were collected prospectively in an RCT. No significant differences were found in terms of survival or mean cost per patient between the two treatment groups. Chemotherapy drug cost was significantly higher for gemcitabine + cisplatin (p<0.0001) and hospitalisation costs were higher (but not significantly) for etoposide + cisplatin. Follow-up of costs to death were not included.

Schiller et al390 retrospectively identified costs for gemcitabine plus cisplatin (Gem/Cis) vs plus paclitaxel (Vin/Cis), paclitaxel plus cisplatin (PaC/Car), docetaxel plus cisplatin (Doc/Cis). The cost analysis was based on the results of two RCTs.391,392 Cost of chemotherapy acquisition, drug administration, hospitalisations and medical resources were calculated from the perspectives of the national health services of five European countries. Gem/Cis was associated with a lower cost than other drug combinations.

8.12.3 Chemotherapy versus Best Supportive Care 2nd line

We identified two studies that assessed the cost-effectiveness of second line chemotherapy with single-agent docetaxel versus BSC.

Leigh et al393 conducted a retrospective cost-effectiveness analysis using efficacy data from a RCT and resource use and cost data from one participating hospital in Canada (Table 104 and Table 105). Costs were followed-up to death. The incremental survival benefit of docetaxel versus BSC was 2 months (p=0.047) and the incremental cost per LY gained was $57,749 (Canadian dollars). For the sub-group of patients treated with the recommended dose of docetaxel (75 mg/m2) the survival benefit was 4 months and the cost per LY gained was $31,776. Second line docetaxel costs an additional $10,600 per patient for an extra 4 months of life.

Clegg et al394 (described above) using an economic model estimated the incremental cost-effectiveness of docetaxel to be £17,546 per LY gained compared to BSC (Table 100).

8.12.4 Supportive care treatment

Supportive care treatments administered alongside the chemotherapy regimen aim to reduce or eliminate the toxic side-effects of chemotherapy. These treatments can be costly and therefore it is important to assess their cost-effectiveness.

Supportive care treatments include antiemetics (control of chemotherapy-induced emesis), antimicrobials (control of chemotherapy-induced infection) and cytoprotective agents (protection of normal cells from chemotherapy-related toxicity). No economic evaluations were identified for any of these treatments in a pure NSCLC population.

Clegg et al394 however, considered the effect of antiemetics would have on the cost-effectiveness ratios of several chemotherapy regimens. The older antiemetic drugs (e.g. metoclopramide) have negligible costs and therefore would make little impact on cost-effectiveness, however the newer agents (e.g. ondansetron) are more effective but more expensive. In the Clegg et al395 model adding antiemetics would slightly increase incremental cost-effectiveness ratios versus BSC. However, although they would increase drug costs, it is likely that they would also impact on efficacy (i.e. fewer patients discontinuing therapy, fewer dose reductions) and other costs (i.e. reduction in costs of managing chemotherapy-related toxicity).
The studies used a number of different effectiveness endpoints for the economic evaluation including LYs gained, QALYs, tumour response, progression-free LYs.

The studies were conducted in a number of different countries and the results of an economic evaluation conducted in one country may not be generalisable to another country because of differences in clinical practice.

Cost-effectiveness of first-line chemotherapy

Chemotherapy generally seems to improve survival at an additional cost relative to BSC. The cost per LY gained seems to be below £20,000 for most regimens that have been evaluated.

The evidence for this is from four economic evaluations set in the UK NHS, three of them using effectiveness data from a multicentre RCT and either prospectively or retrospectively collected data on patient-specific actual resource use.

None of the studies considered the addition of carboplatin rather than cisplatin. Carboplatin could be administered on an outpatient basis and therefore could be a lower cost, more cost-effective alternative, depending on relative drug prices and the costs of treating side effects. Cisplatin is given as an outpatient basis in some units, but its administration costs are likely to be greater because it has to be administered over a much longer period.

To properly assess the cost-effectiveness of chemotherapy, one needs to assess the effectiveness, not just in terms of improvements in survival but also in terms of quality of life (see below).

The choice of first-line chemotherapy regimen

The data suggest that newer regimens generally improve survival at additional cost relative to older regimens. Only one study was set in the UK and did not report cost per LY gained or QALYs.

There are only a limited number of studies that compare the relative cost-effectiveness of one of the newer regimens compared to another. Only one US study that followed-up costs to death reported a statistically significant difference in cost per patient (vinorelbine + cisplatin had significantly lower cost per patient than paclitaxel + carboplatin). The majority of the cost difference was due to the additional cost of chemotherapy. Since, drug acquisition costs in the UK are more favourable for vinorelbine, this would suggest that it could be cost-effective in the UK. However, these results might not strictly be applicable to the UK NHS, because, the patient groups may be dissimilar and the same intervention may have very different resource impacts in different health systems.

Hospitalisation (for administration of chemotherapy or for chemotherapy-related toxicity) as well as chemotherapy drug cost is driving the differences in the cost of drug regimens.

The differences in the estimated cost-effectiveness of different drug regimens are dependent, not just on the efficacy and toxicity of the drugs but also on the:

- Drug price (which can vary substantially, especially when drugs become subject to generic competition)
- Number of cycles/administrations assumed;
- Whether administration was on an outpatient or inpatient basis;
- Prevalence of dose reductions/cancellations.
- The HTA report did not consider differences between regimens in the cost of treating toxicity.

Second-line chemotherapy

Second-line chemotherapy generally seems to improve survival at an additional cost for appropriate patients. The evidence for this is relatively limited given that there have only been two studies (one Canadian and one UK).

There were no studies that assessed the incremental cost-effectiveness of supportive care treatments in an NSCLC population.

Quality of life issues

Quality of life is an important consideration in situations where treatment provides only modest survival gains. It is also an important consideration in treatments that may induce toxicity and therefore quality of life is likely to differ between chemotherapy regimens depending on their toxicity profile. However, only four of the economic evaluations made an attempt to quality adjust survival and from these it is unclear what effect adjusting survival gain with patient’s quality of life would have on incremental cost-effectiveness ratios. For a person in perfect health £20,000 per LY gained would equal £20,000 per QALY gained. So for people in less than perfect health the cost per QALY gained would be expected to be higher, unless chemotherapy is actually improving the quality of life for these patients.

Berthelot et al. in their assessment of several chemotherapy regimens versus BSC, found that chemotherapy was either relatively cost-effective per QALY gained or dominant with the cost per QALY gained being about 50% higher than the cost per LY gained. Clegg et al. used Berthelot's utility values to quality adjust survival and found that the chemotherapy regimens remained relatively cost-effective compared to BSC. The costs per QALY gained were all slightly higher than the costs per LY gained in all but one case. However, another study found BSC to be the dominant strategy. The only other study to assess utility values compared three chemotherapy regimens not including BSC. The main reason for the difference in results relates to a divergence in utility values estimated by Kennedy. Kennedy used mean utility values of 0.34 for chemotherapy and 0.61 for BSC, Berthelot used 0.52 to 0.63 for chemotherapy (depending on regimen) and 0.53 for BSC and Smith used 0.60 for cisplatin-based regimens and 0.7 for single agent regimens. In each case utility values were derived from a number of oncologists so it is unclear why such a substantial divergence arose.

Clegg et al. also reviewed the quantitative information on quality of life and concluded that chemotherapy does not reduce overall quality of life and in some cases it may be improved relative to BSC as metastases that are not controlled are also associated with adverse symptoms that impact on a person’s quality of life. Using Berthelot’s utility scores the HTA report found chemotherapy regimens to be cost-effective relative to a threshold of £30,000 per QALY gained, ranging from £3,000 to £16,000 per QALY gained.
9 Combination Treatment for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

9.1 Introduction

Although NSCLC patients may benefit from treatment with surgery or radiotherapy alone, the cure rate remains disappointingly low. Data from other tumour types suggests that improved survival may be gained from combinations of these modalities.

Adjunct treatment (chemotherapy or radiotherapy) is given after curative-intent surgery or radiotherapy, in an attempt to improve the cure rate. It has been shown to be effective in a number of other common solid tumours such as breast and colorectal cancer.

It is important to distinguish neoadjuvant treatment (usually chemotherapy) and combined chemoradiotherapy from primary chemotherapy. Neoadjuvant chemotherapy is given before planned curative-intent surgery or radiotherapy in patients with resectable disease at presentation. Combined chemoradiotherapy is given to patients eligible for radical radiotherapy and the treatments are either given sequentially or concurrently. In both these settings, neoadjuvant and combined, the aim of adding chemotherapy is to improve the cure rate obtained with surgery or radiotherapy alone.

In contrast, primary chemotherapy is given to patients unsuitable for surgery or radical radiotherapy at presentation in the hope that downstaging their tumour might enable them to proceed to curative surgery or radical radiotherapy. The response rates and survival are much lower in this setting.

Induction chemotherapy is used as a general term to include neoadjuvant treatment and primary chemotherapy as defined above.

There is variation in the definitions and interpretation of the terms resectable and unresectable in regard to pre and postoperative treatment. It may refer to a primary tumour in the chest being technically unresectable at the time of surgery or biologically unresectable because nodes or metastases in other organs must be left behind, meaning that removal of the tumour does not affect the course of the patient’s disease. Furthermore, it is often unclear whether categorization of patients as resectable or unresectable refers to the patient’s status at the time of presentation or after neoadjuvant chemotherapy. Thus, the terms resectable and unresectable should be used with respect to a surgeon’s ability to remove all the tumour tissue in its entirety. Operability or inoperability should refer to the decision based on resectability and all other factors for example lung function, that eventually determines whether a surgeon proceeds to operate or not.

One of the difficulties in reviewing studies of combination therapy is various methods are used for patient selection. While some studies have used surgical (pathological) staging with mediastinoscopy in addition to radiological (clinical) staging with CT, this is not applicable to all. Another issue relates to the substantial heterogeneity in clinical status and prognosis of patients.

In this chapter, we investigate the evidence for combined treatment of NSCLC patients with two or more of these modalities. Various combinations and orders of treatment have been included. Treatments by surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy in isolation are dealt with separately in the previous chapters.
9.2 Techniques included in this review

We included the following combinations of treatment:

- preoperative chemotherapy
- postoperative chemotherapy
- preoperative radiotherapy
- postoperative radiotherapy
- sequential and concurrent chemoradiotherapy

9.3 Methodology

In our initial search, we retrieved a number of systematic reviews published in 2003-2008, in addition to a number of reviews from the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and a guideline. The NCC-AC team undertook additional searches to update these reviews.

The search strategy is shown in appendix six.

9.4 Preoperative Chemotherapy

The role of preoperative chemotherapy has been examined in two categories of disease burden. Most studies have involved patients with stage IIIA and IIIB, while a few trials have considered stage I and II disease.

This section reviews preoperative chemotherapy for patients with stage II-III NSCLC as compared to surgery alone, and includes both neoadjuvant and primary chemotherapy. There was no available evidence on patient selection for treatment.

9.4.1 Effectiveness

A systematic review of 17 phase II trials of induction chemotherapy showed that the non-weighted average mortality rate during induction treatment alone is 2% regardless of induction regimen. Furthermore, the non-weighted average treatment-related mortality occurring at any time during the induction, operative or postoperative recovery period is 4% (Level 2++). In terms of morbidity, grade 3 or 4 neutropenia (WHO scale) was the most common problem noted in the CCOPGI guideline reporting 80% of patients developing severe neutropenia after the first course and four patients (15%) requiring hospitalisation for the treatment of neutropenic fever in one RCT reviewed (Level 1++)

9.4.2 Toxicity

A number of phase II studies have uniformly shown that the treatment is well tolerated and are reported in Table 108. One systematic review of 17 phase II trials of induction chemotherapy showed that the non-weighted average mortality rate during induction treatment alone is 2% regardless of induction regimen. Furthermore, the non-weighted average treatment-related mortality occurring at any time during the induction, operative or postoperative recovery period is 4% (Level 2++). In terms of morbidity, grade 3 or 4 neutropenia (WHO scale) was the most common problem noted in the CCOPGI guideline reporting 80% of patients developing severe neutropenia after the first course and four patients (15%) requiring hospitalisation for the treatment of neutropenic fever in one RCT reviewed (Level 1++)

9.5 Postoperative Chemotherapy

The use of postoperative chemotherapy is based on the premise that following resection of the lung cancer in early NSCLC recurrence can be both systemic as well as local.
9.6 Preoperative Radiotherapy

It was thought at one time that preoperative radiotherapy would make resection of the primary tumour easier, as well as controlling occult residual disease. However, the area has not received much attention since the 1980s.414

A systematic review415 identified two large trials published in the 1970s but no subsequent additional randomised trials of pre-op radiotherapy involving at least 100 patients were retrieved (Table 11). These two trials recruited 331 and 568 operable patients who were randomised to either 40 or 50Gy of pre-op radiotherapy then surgery or surgery alone. The survival curves were almost identical, with 5-year survival rates of 7% and 14% for the preoperative radiotherapy, compared to 12% and 16% for surgery alone (no statistically significant difference) (Level 1+). There was no difference in the rate of complete resection or in the recurrence rate. The studies however, had some limitations. They relied on the staging and radiotherapy techniques available at the time. They also included 10% to 15% of patients with small cell lung cancer. Many of the patients may have had undiagnosed systemic disease because 40% - 50% of both arms died within 6 months.

In summary, we only identified two randomised trials, which do not suggest any benefit of routine preoperative radiotherapy.

9.7 Postoperative Radiotherapy

Postoperative radiotherapy has been examined with the hypothesis that cure rates should be improved by reducing local recurrence.

9.7.1 Complete resection

The patients included in this review are those with NSCLC that have undergone complete surgical resection of the primary tumour.

The Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guidelines Initiative have published evidence based guidance416 for patients with completely resected stages II and IIIA NSCLC, which incorporates and updates a meta-analysis417 by the Postoperative Radiotherapy Trialists Group (PORT). One additional RCT418 was retrieved to update this evidence (Table 112). There were 2,000 patients in 12 trials. The results were very similar to the PORT meta-analysis, which found worse survival overall after postoperative radiotherapy and that the adverse effect of post operative radiotherapy was greater for patients with stage I/II N0/N1 disease and less obvious for stage III, N2 disease.

The CCOPGI review found significantly lower recurrence in the group randomised to postoperative radiotherapy (p=0.012). Quality of life was not reported. Radiation related toxicity events were regarded as at an acceptable level. There were no treatment related deaths (Level 1+).

However, a number of criticisms can be made of studies included in the PORT meta-analysis. Seven of the nine studies included in the meta-analysis used 4CCs machines rather than linear accelerators (LINACs). This is likely to have implications in the accuracy of targeting the treatment volume and increasing the lung dose. In addition, the doses used were sometimes lower than would be used in modern treatment plans and thus potentially less effective. For these reasons the results of this meta-analysis for patients with stage III should be treated with some caution.

The additional RCT418 retrieved reported more favourable results with the addition of radiotherapy in stage I NSCLC patients (Table 112). Statistically significant improved outcomes were reported for 5-year disease-free survival (71% versus 60% in control group (p=0.039)) and overall survival (67% versus 58% in control group (p=0.048)). There were no treatment related deaths reported (Level 1+).

In summary, despite those results from a recent RCT418, the meta analyses have shown that there is still no strong evidence to recommend routine postoperative radiotherapy. However, for patients with stage III NSCLC, modern radiotherapy may possibly afford benefits in term of local control without the toxicity seen with earlier treatments, further randomised trials are need in this area.

9.7.2 Incomplete resection

Intuitively, postoperative radiotherapy where there has been incomplete resection of the primary tumour should be helpful in NSCLC patients. However, there is very little evidence in this area.

A systematic review419,420 found only two studies421 prior to 2000, each of which included around 30 patients with incomplete resection (Table 113). These two studies were not controlled, but reported encouraging five-year survival figures of 78% and 23% for N0 patients with positive resection margin. (Level 3) Our literature search uncovered no studies since 2000. Therefore, there is weak evidence that postoperative radiotherapy in patients with incompletely resected NSCLC may improve local control.

9.8 Postoperative Chemoradiotherapy

Postoperative chemoradiotherapy has been used in clinical trials for patients in stage II and III NSCLC. It is envisaged that the addition of chemotherapy might enhance the effects of radiotherapy.

9.8.1 Effectiveness

A recent review422 provides the best available evidence for the clinical effectiveness of postoperative chemoradiotherapy versus postoperative radiotherapy. One additional RCT423 was retrieved. The results are presented in Table 114.

The review422 of seven trials (807 patients in total) reported that the overall hazard ratio of 0.98 (p=0.76) was marginally in favour of chemoradiotherapy although the result was not statistically significant (Level 1+). However, it should be noted that the authors were not able to distinguish between those studies that included patients with complete resection only, incomplete resection only, and those that had a mixture of both. Keller et al.424 reported results from 488 stage II and IIIA patients who had undergone complete resection and were randomised to either postoperative radiotherapy or postoperative chemoradiotherapy. There was no statistically significant difference in median survival (38 months versus 39 months). There was a high incidence of side effects in the chemoradiotherapy arm, although the two arms had similar mortality (Level 1+).

In conclusion, there is not sufficient evidence at present to recommend the routine use of postoperative chemo radiotherapy.

9.9 Primary Chemoradiotherapy for inoperable Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

This section focuses on the use of combination chemotherapy and radiotherapy for the treatment of stage IIIA, IB NSCLC patients (although it is likely that a small proportion of patients within some of the trials had stage I or stage II disease). Chemoradiotherapy can be scheduled either concurrently or sequentially, usually involving chemotherapy first. This section discusses both of these techniques and compares the two approaches.

9.9.1 Patient Eligibility

One systematic review was retrieved which looked at patient eligibility for chemoradiotherapy425. The results of the systematic review are presented in Table 115.

Individual trials in the systematic review found that performance status was a major independent prognostic factor (see appendix 2, Figure 4 for comparison of Karnofsky and WHO/Zubrod performance status scales). The review also found inconsistent evidence to identify weight loss as an independent prognostic factor426 (Level 1+).

9.9.2 Sequential Chemoradiotherapy

9.9.2.1 Effectiveness

Table 116 illustrates the retrieved results for effectiveness of non-cisplatin based chemoradiotherapy (3 trials427,428,429, 431 patients). There were no significant differences in the objective response rates in the chemoradiotherapy arms when compared with radiotherapy alone (Level 1+).

However, in patients treated with cisplatin based chemotherapy (7 trials427,430, 1857 patients) a trend toward better response rates was seen (Table 117) (Level 1+).

Non-cisplatin based chemoradiotherapy does not improve survival compared with radiotherapy alone (Table 116). However, sequential cisplatin based chemoradiotherapy does (Table 117) (Level 1+). The rate of local control is not altered by use of sequential chemoradiotherapy (Level 1+).
9.9.2.2 Adverse effects
Treatment-related mortality with chemoradiotherapy is rare, averaging about 1% to 3% of all patients and does not appear to differ between treatment strategies Table 116 and Table 117 (Level 1+). Acute haematological toxicity is more common with chemoradiotherapy but is generally well tolerated. The toxicity rates vary depending on the chemotherapy agents and doses, but there is no clear difference based on treatment strategy in making comparisons across studies. Addition of chemotherapy to radiotherapy has not resulted in significantly increased toxicity compared with radiotherapy alone, with the exception of haematological toxicity, nausea and vomiting, which is variable depending on the agents used. Only one study reported that there was more oesophagitis in the chemoradiotherapy arm. It is not known whether adding another treatment modality reduces the dose-intensity of the primary modality.

9.9.2.3 Quality of life
No quality of life data are available on sequential chemoradiotherapy.

9.9.2.4 Conclusion
These data suggest that sequential chemoradiation offers a survival advantage over radiotherapy alone for inoperable stage I to IIIB patients with NSCLC. However, the optimal dose and fractionation of the radiation remains under investigation.

9.9.3 Primary Concurrent Chemotherapy for Inoperable Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

9.9.3.1 Identified evidence
When considering concurrent chemoradiotherapy, all interventions that had a planned overlap in treatment modalities were considered. A recent Cochrane review was retrieved. There were no additional studies identified.

9.9.3.2 Effectiveness
A systematic review and meta-analysis of 14 RCTs, (2389 patients) comparing concurrent chemoradiotherapy and radiotherapy alone reported a reduced risk of death at two-years (relative risk 0.93, p=0.01) and improved two-year locoregional progression-free survival (relative risk 0.84, p=0.03) and progression free survival at any site (relative risk 0.90, p=0.005) (Table 118) (Level 1+). The improvement of survival was more convincingly demonstrated in those receiving once daily radiotherapy or higher total doses of chemotherapy (Level 1+).

9.9.3.3 Adverse Effects
There were more adverse effects in the combination arm, especially oesophagitis. The incidence of treatment-related deaths (less than 1% overall), radiation pneumonitis, pulmonary fibrosis and late oesophageal damage were not increased by concurrent treatment. Anemia of any grade was more common in the concurrent arm of the 3 trials in which this was reported. However, it should be emphasised that the RCTs included in this review only had limited adverse event reporting in terms of the incidence of late effects.

The NCC-AC did not find any evidence on quality of life.

9.9.4 Comparison of sequential versus concurrent chemoradiotherapy
A Cochrane review compared concurrent and sequential chemoradiotherapy.

9.9.4.1 Effectiveness
A meta-analysis of three trials of concurrent versus sequential treatment was performed as part of the systematic review. All three trials used cisplatin-based regimens and once daily radiotherapy to doses of 60-66Gy (Table 119). This indicated a significant improvement in two-year survival with concurrent as compared to sequential treatment (relative risk 0.86; 95% CI 0.78-0.95, p=0.003). Caution must be exercised in the interpretation of these data as these trials are as yet published only in abstract form.

9.9.4.2 Adverse effects
There were more deaths in the concurrent arms (approx 3%-overall) but the difference did not reach statistical significance. Acute oesophagitis was more frequent in the concurrent arm. Again, there was limited adverse event reporting for example, for some aspects of toxicity, conclusions were based on only one or two of the three trials (Table 119) (Level 1+).

No evidence covering quality of life was found.

9.9.4.3 Conclusion
There is good evidence from a meta-analysis that primary concurrent cisplatin-based chemoradiotherapy for inoperable stage III NSCLC increases survival compared to radiotherapy alone. However, this may be accompanied by an increased risk of adverse effects, particularly oesophagitis. (Level 1+). Treatment-related mortality is not increased but the effects on quality of life are unknown. It is unclear how this result relates to accelerated treatments such as CHART which is completed in 2 weeks. There is no clear evidence to recommend a particular chemotherapy regimen or frequency of administration.

From comparisons of sequential versus concurrent regimens for chemoradiotherapy, there is evidence of improved survival at two years with concurrent treatment, but this may be at the expense of added toxicity. However the short follow-up in these studies means that the magnitude of benefit should still be regarded as uncertain. The limited conclusions regarding toxicity and the possible increase in treatment-related mortality mean that concurrent chemoradiotherapy cannot be recommended for routine use at the present time. As the three trials used conventionally fractionated radiotherapy to 60-66Gy, it is unclear how this related to alternative fractionation schedules, such as the 55Gy in 20 fractions or CHART should be supported. Essential features of these trials would include detailed recording of the impact of quality of life and toxicity, particularly pulmonary toxicity which may have a confounding effect.

Future developments in radiotherapy planning and treatment delivery may offset the added toxicity of concurrent chemoradiotherapy and still permit exploration of higher total radiotherapy doses.

9.10 Pancoast Tumours
Tumours arising in the apex of the chest with chest wall or brachial plexus invasion are known as Pancoast tumours. Over 90% of patients with Pancoast syndrome have non-small cell lung cancer. The treatment of these tumours has been influenced by a systematic review of surgery for Pancoast tumours specifically. The treatment of these tumours has been influenced by a systematic review of surgery for Pancoast tumours specifically. The treatment of these tumours has been influenced by a systematic review of surgery for Pancoast tumours specifically.

9.10.1 Patient Eligibility
One systematic review retrieved which reported prognostic factors for combination radiotherapy and surgery for Pancoast tumours specifically. The results reported that vertebral body invasion, subclavian artery invasion, rib involvement and N2, N3 node involvement and Horner’s syndrome are poor prognostic factors (Level 3).

9.10.2 Effectiveness
One systematic review retrieved by the NCC-AC search that reported only survival-related outcomes from studies of combination treatment for Pancoast tumours (Table 121). Our search identified no additional evidence to update this review.
Radiotherapy and surgery results in a five-year survival of 27% (15%-40%). Five-year survival for completely resected patients is 34% (25%-44%) (Level 3).

9.10.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, there is great variation in the survival figures for combination treatment for Pancoast tumours. There is an absence of randomised controlled trials of treatment policies in this condition. It is recommended that treatment be guided by stage and performance status as in other cases of NSCLC.

9.11 Economics of Combination Treatment for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

The combined modality interventions in treatment of NSCLC are often associated with improved outcomes for some patients but increased overall cost, which necessitates the assessment of incremental cost-effectiveness.

The four economic analyses on combination treatment for NSCLC (including one abstract) were summarised in Table 122 and Table 123. The included studies compared standard radiotherapy alone with various forms of combined treatment.

Radiotherapy versus different non-conventional radiotherapy with/without chemotherapy

The only UK study had evaluated the cost-effectiveness of different non-conventional radiotherapy regimens with or without chemotherapy, in comparison to standard radiotherapy. The regimens under consideration were as follows:

1. Standard radiotherapy (60Gy in 30 fractions, 5 per week for 6 weeks).
2. Accelerated radiotherapy (the use of two or more fractions of standard fraction size daily to the same conventional total dose as standard radiotherapy. 60Gy in 30 fractions, 10 per week for 3 weeks).
3. Accelerated radiotherapy + chemotherapy (IV Carboplatin 70mg/m2/day on 1 to 5 days).
4. Hyperfractionated (nonaccelerated) radiotherapy (the use of two or more fractions daily of smaller than conventional fraction size).
5. Hyperfractionated radiotherapy + chemotherapy (cisplatin 20mg, fluorouracil 300mg, VP-16 50mg, cisplatin 25mg and repeated at 10th week of radiotherapy. After radiotherapy, cisplatin 25mg, etoposide 120mg, ifosfamide 2g, uraciltecin 3x400mg dy 1-3, all at 6x at 4wk intervals).
6. Split course (splitting the total dose into at least two separate courses with an interruption of 10 to 14 days) + hyperfractionated radiotherapy + chemotherapy (cisplatin 30mg/m2, days 1-3 and 28-30 and etoposide 100mg/m2, days 1-3 and 28-30, or alternatively, cisplatin 60mg, adriamycin 40 mg, for ac only + mitomycin 10mg or Epipodophyllotoxin etoposide 100mg).
7. CHART (Continuous Hyperfractionated Accelerated Radiotherapy) (the use of many small fractions given over a reduced time. Total radiotherapy 54 Gy. 1.5Gy fractions-hyperfractionated and 3 fractions given per day for 12 days-accelerated).

The number of LYs gained from each intervention was obtained from seven different trials varying from 36 to 563 patients at various stages of NSCLC.

Among the seven different modalities, two procedures, split course hyperfractionated radiotherapy with chemotherapy and CHART had a statistically significant survival advantage relative to standard radiotherapy. There was a gain of 1.05 life-years with the split course hyperfractionated radiotherapy with chemotherapy and 0.27 LY gained with CHART relative to standard radiotherapy alone. The cost per LY gained was £2,331 for split course hyperfractionated radiotherapy with chemotherapy and £1,227 for CHART, and these two modalities were determined to be cost-effective relative to their comparators (for our own estimate of the cost-effectiveness of CHART see Chapter 7 on radical radiotherapy alone for the treatment of NSCLC).

The literature search identified one abstract that presented the cost-effectiveness of concurrent versus sequential chemotherapy and radiotherapy for locally advanced NSCLC patients.

The analysis was based on an RCT designed to compare:

> arm A: the induction treatment by platinum (120mg/m2/day 1, 29 and 57) and vindesine (30mg/m2/week, day 1 to day 78) followed by a thoracic radiation (66Gy), with

> arm B: thoracic radiation (66Gy) with two concurrent chemotherapy cycles (platin 20mg/m2– etoposide 50mg/m2, day 1 to 5) followed by two cycles (platinum-vinorelbine).

Direct hospital costs of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, side effects, follow-up, relapse treatments and terminal care until death were calculated. Concurrent chemoradiotherapy resulted in improved life expectancy with a lower cost.

Standard radiotherapy versus induction chemotherapy and radiotherapy

Dillman et al aimed to find out whether chemotherapy before high-dose radiation therapy would have a beneficial effect compared with radiotherapy alone for stage III NSCLC patients in the USA and Canada. The study was non-blinded randomised controlled trial. The duration of follow up of the treatment cohort was three years.

Patients in the intervention group received cisplatin (100mg/m2/day 1 and 29) and vinblastine (5mg/m2, days 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29) and then began radiotherapy on day 50 (60 Gy over a 6 week period). Patients in the control group received the same radiation therapy immediately. Direct costs of chemotherapy and radiotherapy were obtained from a private metropolitan hospital.

The results showed that induction chemotherapy with cisplatin and vinblastine before radiation significantly improved life expectancy (0.49 LY gained) and was found to be cost-effective ($7,143/LY gained).

Evans et al evaluated the cost-effectiveness of the standard treatment of radiotherapy alone versus preand postoperative chemotherapy with and without postoperative radiotherapy, and chemotherapy and radiotherapy. LY gained for each type of combined treatments were obtained from retrospective data for stage IIIA patients and from randomised trials for stage IIIB patients.

In order to estimate costs, it was assumed that all patients received two cycles of preoperative mitomycin-vindicine-cisplatin (MVP) (mitomycin 8mg/m2 on day 1; vindesine 3mg/m2 on days 1, 8, 15, 22, and 22; and cisplatin 120mg/m2 on day 1 MVP). Patients who responded to the chemotherapy underwent thoracotomy for surgical resection followed by two further cycles of postoperative MVP for the first modality.

For the second regimen, it was assumed that all patients received three preoperative MVP and that 70% of those patients went on to surgery (complete resection). All patients who underwent surgery received two cycles postoperative MVP and postoperative mediastinal irradiation.

The third intervention for stage IIIIB NSCLC patients involved two cycles of vinblastine-cisplatin and then radiotherapy (cisplatin 100mg/m2 on 1 and 29 and vinblastine 5mg/m2 on days 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29). Then, radiation was given on day 50, 60 Cy over a 6 week period.

All forms of combination therapies in this study improved life expectancy (1.26 LY gained for stage IIIA patients and 1.14 LY gained for stage IIIB patients) relative to radiotherapy alone. The cost per LY gained was Can$50,348 ($4,172) for pre- and postoperative chemotherapy, Can$14,958 ($6,674) for chemotherapy+ surgery + postoperative radiotherapy and Can$3,348 ($1,494) for chemotherapy + radiotherapy.

The sensitivity analysis reducing survival gains from each intervention by 25% and 50% although the cost-effectiveness ratio for all interventions increased, they stayed below the Can$20,000 cost effectiveness threshold adopted by this study, except for the second intervention with 50% reduced
10 Endobronchial Treatment as Radical Treatment for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

10.1 Introduction
In this chapter we examine the use of endobronchial techniques in the treatment of early stage non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). This section describes the use of these techniques as treatment with curative intent in patients who are unsuitable for treatment with other modalities. Most commonly this is due to comorbidity, particularly poor respiratory reserve.

Endobronchial methods are also used commonly in palliative treatment and these will be discussed in the chapter 12 on palliative interventions and Supportive and Palliative Care.

The diagnosis and treatment of in situ carcinomas is outside the scope of this guideline, thus papers have been excluded if they only include patients with in situ carcinoma. However, many of the studies do include a proportion of patients with in situ carcinoma. This may have affected the survival figures measured as these are likely to have longer survival untreated than other patients.

10.2 Techniques included in this review
This chapter considers photodynamic therapy (PDT), brachytherapy, electrocautery, cryotherapy and Neodymium-Yttrium Aluminum Garnet (Nd:YAG) laser ablation. This review has looked at endobronchial therapies used for curative intent only.

10.3 Methodology
A systematic review by Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guidelines Initiative was found which examined the use of photodynamic therapy in the treatment of early stage NSCLC.

The full search strategy can be found in appendix six.

10.4 Photodynamic Therapy
10.4.1 Technique
Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is based on the interaction of tumour-selective photo sensitizer (mainly porphyrin sodium and haematoporphyrin derivative) and laser light of a particular wavelength (around 630nm for porphyrin sodium).

There are many applications of the technique in cancer (particularly skin) and other areas. The majority of data in lung cancer is from patients deemed non-surgical candidates or as a palliative intervention. There has, however, been some work looking at treatment of early stage bronchoscopically accessible tumours with curative intent.

10.4.2 Quality and amount of evidence
A total of 49 papers were identified. This included 33 reviews, one RCT, 10 prospective cohort studies, two case series and three other papers. The majority of the papers pertained to use of PDT in late stage NSCLC for palliation. In total 41 papers were discarded for this reason, for non-systematic methods, or because the evidence had been included in a more recent paper or systematic review. Two systematic reviews were identified the most recent being that by the Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guidelines Initiative on photodynamic therapy. Papers included in these reviews were mainly non-controlled observational studies. No randomised controlled trials were found.

10.4.3 Patient eligibility
Papers reporting on PDT for curative treatment included patients with early stage 0 and stage 1 disease. Patients generally were unsuitable for or

10 Endobronchial Treatment as Radical Treatment for Non Small Cell Lung Cancer

9.12 Recommendations
9.12.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations
Patients with stage I, II or IIIA NSCLC who are suitable for resection should not be offered preoperative chemotherapy unless it is part of a clinical trial. [B]

Preoperative radiotherapy is not recommended for patients with NSCLC who are able to have surgery. [A]

Postoperative radiotherapy is not recommended for patients with NSCLC after complete resection. [A]

Postoperative radiotherapy should be considered after incomplete resection of the primary tumour for patients with NSCLC, with the aim of improving local control. [D]

Adjuvant chemotherapy should be offered to NSCLC patients who have had a complete resection, with discussion of the risks and benefits. [A]

Patients who are pathologically staged as II and III NSCLC following resection should not receive postoperative chemoradiotherapy unless it is within a clinical trial. [B]

Patients with stage III NSCLC who are not suitable for surgery but are eligible for radical radiotherapy should be offered sequential chemoradiotherapy. [A]

9.12.2 Research Recommendations
Research is needed to compare concurrent chemoradiotherapy with alternative fractionation schedules (such as 55 Gy in 20 fractions or CHART) with sequential chemoradiotherapy for patients with NSCLC. Outcomes measured should include detailed recording of the impact on quality of life and on toxicity.

Further large-scale prospective trials should be conducted into the effect on survival and quality of life of postoperative radiotherapy compared to surgery alone in the treatment of completely resected stage III NSCLC patients.

Prospective randomised controlled trials should be conducted into the effect on survival and quality of life of treatment with preoperative radiotherapy and chemotherapy in the treatment of patients with Pancoast tumours compared to surgery alone.
refused surgery. Papers looking at palliative treatment and assessment of technique were not included in this section. Two studies included a proportion of patients with in situ carcinoma.

10.4.4 Evidence of effectiveness
The systematic review by the Cancer Care Ontario Practice Guidelines Initiative\(^2\) included evidence from 10 non-controlled observational studies and one summary paper. The results are presented in Table 124. A total of 444 patients were included in the trials. Overall, these methodologically weak studies found a 5 year survival ranging from 44-72\% and a complete response rate ranging from 31-85\%. Eight out of 10 studies reported toxicity and the most common adverse effect was photosensitivity, most commonly sunburn. The most serious adverse effects reported were respiratory failure and haemoptysis. (Level 3)

No data was found that compared PDT with other techniques, or no treatment.

10.4.5 Conclusions
PDT appears to be effective in managing small superficial squamous cell carcinoma. (Level 3) However, there is no evidence from randomised controlled trials and no comparisons with active supportive care or other treatment options. There is therefore insufficient evidence to recommend photodynamic therapy as a cause of treatment in preference to other treatment options at the present time.

10.5 Brachytherapy

10.5.1 Technique
Brachytherapy is the use of a radioactive source within or near an endobronchial malignancy to deliver local irradiation. Iridium-192 is the most commonly used source. It is placed bronchoscopically through a catheter.

10.5.2 Quality and amount of evidence
A total of 51 papers were identified. This included 19 reviews, one RCT, 20 prospective cohort studies, five case series and six other papers. In total 49 papers were discarded for either covering palliative interventions rather than curative treatment, for non-systematic methods or because the evidence had been included in a more recent paper. Two non-controlled observational studies were included\(^1,4\). No randomised controlled trials were found.

10.5.3 Patient eligibility
Papers reporting on brachytherapy for curative treatment included patients with early stage 0 and stage 1 disease that were unsuitable for treatment with other modalities. Papers looking at palliative treatment and assessment of technique were not included in this section.

10.5.4 Evidence of effectiveness
The evidence is summarised in Table 125. Two non-controlled studies were found with low patient numbers\(^4\). Local control was found to be 75\% at one year\(^4\) and 85\% at 2 years\(^4\). Two year survival was found to range from 58\%\(\) to 78\%\(\) (Level 3). There was no evidence that compared the use of brachytherapy to no treatment or to other treatment options for this patient group.

10.5.5 Conclusions
The two small non-controlled trials appear to show that treatment with brachytherapy can produce good response and survival results (Level 3), however this evidence is weakened by the low patient numbers involved. There was also no evidence that compared this treatment to other treatment options and therefore brachytherapy cannot be recommended as a first choice of treatment in early stage NSCLC patients.

10.6 Electrocautery

10.6.1 Technique
This technique uses high frequency electrical current, which produces heat from tissue resistance and then destroys tumour cells.

10.6.2 Quality and amount of evidence
A total of 20 papers were identified. This included 11 reviews, one RCT, four prospective cohort studies, one case series and three other papers. In total 18 papers were discarded for non-systematic methods or because the evidence had been included in a more recent paper. One non-controlled study was included in the review\(^6\).

10.6.3 Patient eligibility
Papers reporting on electrocautery for curative treatment included patients with early stage 0 and stage 1 disease. Papers looking at palliative treatment and assessment of technique were not included in this section.

10.6.4 Evidence of effectiveness
There is very little evidence of its effectiveness as a curative therapy for lung cancer. Only one small study, by Van Boxem et al, with 13 patients\(^6\) was found. The study found a complete response in 80\% of lesions. (Level 3). Please see Table 126 for details.

10.6.5 Conclusions
There is very little evidence for the use of electrocautery in the treatment of early stage NSCLC for curative intent and the technique cannot at present be recommended in favour of alternative treatment modalities.

10.7 Cryotherapy
Cryotherapy involves destroying tissue by freezing. No studies on cryotherapy for curative treatment of invasive NSCLC were found from the literature search.

10.8 Nd YAG Laser ablation
We searched for studies on the use of a Nd YAG laser to cause direct thermal ablation bronchoscopically for attempted curative treatment. No evidence was found that examined the long term outcomes of patients treated this way. This technique has been more extensively used as a palliative intervention (see Chapter 12).
11 Treatment of Small Cell Lung Cancer

11.1 Introduction
Approximately 20% of all lung cancers are diagnosed as small cell lung cancer (SCLC). Around 40% of cases are classified as limited stage while the remainder are extensive stage\textsuperscript{436} (see Staging chapter 5). Over the years, there have been different definitions of limited stage. Most now follow the IASLC definition of limited stage as disease confined to one hemithorax (including pleural effusion) plus bilateral hilar or supraclavicular lymphadenopathy. Extensive disease is anything outside of these areas. While this may suggest that the two stages are distinct in terms of the type of treatment offered, there are subsets of patients with extensive disease who may benefit from the same treatment as limited disease. As survival is usually not affected by small differences in the degree of loco regional tumour involvement, selecting the most appropriate treatment is a matter of good or poor prognosis, instead of limited disease (LD) and extensive disease (ED) groups\textsuperscript{436}.

Evidence on the natural history of SCLC is only available from a small number of historical studies conducted prior to the availability of computed tomography. The results therefore, should be treated with caution as a number of patients considered to have limited stage disease may have been understaged\textsuperscript{436}. A recently published Cochrane review on chemotherapy versus best supportive care in SCLC patients\textsuperscript{437} (Table 128) reports results from two trials by Kokron (1977 and 1982) in which patients received chemotherapy with symptomatic treatment (antibiotics and analgesics in the first study and infusion of Ringers solution 3 times/week in the second study) (Table 128). The trials report that with symptomatic treatment only, survival of SCLC patients ranges between 56 and 93 days.

11.2 Treatment techniques included in this review
This review is confined to chemotherapy, chemoradiotherapy (both thoracic radiotherapy and prophylactic cranial irradiation- PCI) and the addition of surgery to these treatments.

11.3 Methodology
SIGN reviewed the evidence included in this chapter. The methods are described in section 2.1.2. The search strategy can be found in appendix six.

11.4 Patient Eligibility
One systematic review was identified that examined factors affecting the prognosis of SCLC patients\textsuperscript{438} (Table 127). Although such evidence can provide some tentative conclusions on the eligibility of patients for treatment, it does not clearly define how to select patients for treatment. Among the most significant factors consistently associated with poorer survival are poor performance status (WHO $\geq 2$, see Appendix 2, Figure 4 for comparison of Karnofsky and WHO/Zubrod performance status scales) and elevated lactate dehydrogenase levels (LDH) (Level 3). Other prognostic factors of moderate importance are the presence of extensive disease and being of the male sex. Multiple metastatic sites were also reported to be of moderate prognostic significance although too few studies included number of metastatic sites to be confident about this\textsuperscript{438}. The significance of raised alkaline phosphate levels, low serum sodium and older age of patients is less well defined (Level 3).

In the UK, treatment decisions are not made on the basis of a single prognostic factor, such as disease
extent but on the number of adverse features. For example SCLC patients with 3-5 adverse features have a substantially worse prognosis than those with 0-2.

Prolonged survival is restricted to patients with 0-1 adverse features and these patients are offered more intensive treatments, whereas patients with multiple adverse features have minimal chance of prolonged survival and are offered less toxic treatments with palliative intent. It is important to explain to patients the rationale for recommending different treatments.

In conclusion, while patients with adverse prognostic features do not achieve the same degree of survival benefits as patients with a good performance status and/or normal LDH levels (Level 3), chemotherapy is likely to extend their life expectancy markedly (see 11.5), and these patients can gain excellent symptom palliation with treatment. However, the toxicity of treatment does appear to be higher in poor performance status patients, making patient selection for treatment a matter of clinical judgement.

11.5 Chemotherapy

As SCLC metastasises early, a systemic approach is appropriate for the majority of patients. Chemotherapy remains the mainstay of treating patients with SCLC and its effectiveness is well documented.

A recently published Cochrane review on the effectiveness of chemotherapy for patients with extensive SCLC reported that the treatment prolongs survival in comparison with placebo in patients with advanced SCLC (Level 1++) (Table 128). For patients with poor prognostic factors, the risks and benefits are more finely balanced but the majority of patients will achieve subjective and objective responses, with an overall survival benefit (Level 1++) if the treatment regimen is equipped. However, the benefit of combination chemotherapy regimens is not clear (Level 1+).

11.5.1 Single agent versus multiple agents

Although there are few randomised trials comparing combination and single agent chemotherapy, there is little doubt that combination therapy produces better results. One systematic review including data from three randomised trials reports the evidence on single agent versus multiple agent regimens (Table 129). No additional RCTs were retrieved that update this review.

Lowenbraun et al. randomly assigned 68 patients (a majority of whom had extensive disease) to single or combination chemotherapy and reported a statistically significant difference in response rate (12% vs. 59%; p<0.005) and median survival time (18 weeks vs. 21 weeks, p<0.01 (Level 1+). Girling et al. found similar results from a randomised trial in SCLC patients with poor PS. Statistically significant results again favoured the combination chemotherapy treatment arm in terms of overall response (45% vs. 51%), median survival time (4 months vs. 6 months) and 6-month survival (35% vs. 49%) (Level 1+).

Souto et al. also demonstrated that oral etoposide was inferior to intravenous combination chemotherapy in patients with poor performance status and extensive disease. Survival was significantly in favour of those receiving IV therapy (5.9 vs. 4.8 months, 1 year survival 19% vs. 10%, p=0.05) and all aspects of symptom control and quality of life (except acute nausea and vomiting) were the same or worse in the single drug (etoposide) arm of the trial.

We can conclude that results from the use of multi-agent chemotherapy yield better responses than use of single agent treatment (Level 1+).

11.5.2 Platinum versus non-platinum containing regimens

While the evidence for combination chemotherapy is clear, the most effective multiple agent chemotherapy regimen is still a matter of debate. Anthracycline-based regimens (e.g. doxorubicin, epirubicin) have often been preferred to platinum-based regimens because they are easier and cheaper to give in the outpatient setting.

Early studies suggested that such regimens were equipotent, but SIGN retrieved a meta-analysis and a RCT to update this evidence (Table 130). The meta-analysis of cisplatin vs. non-cisplatin containing regimens contained 19 trials on 4054 lung cancer patients with both extensive and limited disease reported that the response rate for patients in the non-platinum based arm was 62%, while for those patients receiving cisplatin, it was increased to 69% (p<0.0001), with an odds ratio of 1.35 (95%CI 1.18-1.55), p=10^-4 (Level 1+). In terms of survival, the risk of death at 6 and 12 months for patients were lower in the platinum based arm: OR 0.87 (0.75-0.98, p=0.03) and OR 0.80 (0.69-0.93, p=0.002), respectively. While this meta-analysis however, included limited and extensive disease patients, it did not include studies of carboplatin, so these results cannot be extrapolated to treatment with carboplatin-based regimens. A single RCT was published after the review was retrieved.

Sundstrom et al. (2002) randomised 440 patients (approximately half of whom were patients with limited disease) to etoposide and cisplatin or etoposide, cyclophosphamide and vincristine and concluded that overall the platinum regimen was statistically superior (p<0.0005) both in terms of 2-year survival (14% vs. 6%) and 5-year survival (5% vs. 2%) (Level 1+).

In conclusion, platinum based treatment is more effective for 1st line treatment of SCLC than non-platinum containing treatment regimens (Level 1+). It should also be noted that platinum combinations are associated with less mucosal toxicity, less myelosuppression and are easier to combine with radiotherapy than anthracycline-based regimens.

11.5.3 Cisplatin versus Carboplatin

A systematic review compared the efficacy of carboplatin versus cisplatin (Table 131). Clinical practice currently resides with using cisplatin where survival is the primary aim and carboplatin where palliation is the primary aim. While the trials purport to show equivalence, they are either underpowered or the statistical significance of the difference is unclear (Level 1+).

11.5.4 Duration of treatment

There is evidence from a review reporting the results from several RCTs on the optimum number of cycles of chemotherapy for patients with limited disease SCLC, comparing 3 vs. 6, 4 vs. 8 and 5 vs. 6 cycles. This evidence suggests that there is a small survival advantage for longer treatment but it is usually outweighed by the toxicity and burden of prolonged treatment (Level 1+). The compromise to quality of life that additional cycles of treatment can cause means that careful patient selection must take place before advocating more than four to six cycles of treatment. One RCT which updates this review, reported that despite some encouraging results for maintenance therapy in extensive disease patients previously treated with etoposide, ifosfamide plus cisplatin, the significance of these results was not clear.

11.5.5 Dose Intensity

Dose intensity refers to the amount of drug delivered in a given period of time, which is usually standardised to body surface area (mg/m²/day).

It has been demonstrated that increasing the dose intensity results in improved outcomes in studies of other ‘chemosensitive’ cancers. There is a range of methods to achieve an increase in dose intensity. This review was restricted to increasing the dose or decreasing the interval of standard chemotherapy and excludes studies of high dose therapy with haemopoetic stem cell transplantation.

11.5.5.1 Standard Dose Intensity

A systematic review was retrieved by SIGN reporting results of conventional methods of dose intensification for patients with limited and extensive disease (Table 133). One meta-analysis within this review reported a retrospective analysis of the results of the intended dose of 60 studies, using a variety of different chemotherapeutic regimens and so, is of very limited value. No statistically significant results were found in relation to objective response, complete response or median survival time (Level 1+).

Several more recent studies have prospectively evaluated the effects of increasing cytotoxic dose intensity in RCTs. An RCT also within the review, evaluated and reported the effect of the delivered dose intensity in limited disease patients (300mg/m² cycle days 1-4 and 100mg/m² cis) vs. 225 mg/m² cycle days 1-4 and 80 mg/m² cisplatin, in conjunction with same doses of doxorubicin, etoposide and radiation in both arms with more favourable results although, this study examined the effect of higher doses for the first treatment cycle only. At 6 months, the complete...
response rate and the median duration of this response significantly favoured the dose-escalated arm. Overall survival was improved at 30 months and 2-year disease-free survival was also superior, although there was increased toxicity within this arm (Level 1+). These results for increasing dose intensity are reflected in a later trial on patients with good prognostic factors. None of the additional four phase three trials showed a survival advantage in the dose intensive arm and this arm often resulted in greater toxicity. An additional RCT, reviewed by the SIGN literature search, reported results of both limited and extensive stage patients. There was no significant difference in terms of survival, response and toxicity between the high-dose platinum arm compared to the carboplatin alone arm (Level 1+).

11.5.5.2 Dose Intensity with the Addition of Growth Factors

A systematic review and four RCTs were retrieved on the effectiveness of dose intensification with the addition of growth factors (Table 134). Several RCTs within the review, with the exception of Stewart et al, failed to demonstrate improved survival with more dose intensive support (Level 1+). Sculier et al reported that there was no evidence that patient outcomes improved when patients were randomised to either standard chemotherapy with 6 courses of EPI (epirubicin 60 mg/m², vincristine 3 mg/m², dacarbazine 5 g/m²) given on day 1 repeated every 3 weeks versus accelerated chemotherapy with EPI administered every 2 weeks and G-CSF support versus accelerated chemotherapy with EPI and oral antibiotics (cotrimoxazole) (Level 1+). Mavroudis et al randomised patients to either TEP (paclitaxel 175 mg/m² iv three-hour infusion on day 1, cisplatin 80 mg/m² iv on day 2 and etoposide 80 mg/m² iv on days 2-4 with G-CSF support [5 mcg/kg s.c. days 5-15]) versus standard EP (cisplatin 80 mg/m² iv on day 1 and etoposide 120 mg/m² iv on days 1-3) in cycles every twenty-eight days but it was reported that TEP option was too toxic for routine use and the study was terminated early due to excessive toxicity and mortality in this arm. Thatcher et al randomised patients to receive six cycles of ACE either every 3 weeks (control [C] group) or every 2 weeks with G-CSF (G group), standard dose-intensity of ACE was increased by 50% in group G. The results concluded that increasing the dose-intensity of ACE with G-CSF support improved survival while maintaining acceptable toxicity. In the final trial retrieved, patients were randomised to either standard CDE (cyclophosphamide 1,250 mg/m² and doxorubicin 45 mg/m² on day 1 and etoposide 100 mg/m² on days 1 to 3 every 3 weeks for 5 cycles) or intensified CDE (cyclophosphamide 1,250 mg/m² and doxorubicin 55 mg/m² on day 1, and etoposide 125 mg/m² on days 1 to 3 with G-CSF 5mcg/kg/d on days 4 to 13 every 2 weeks for 4 cycles). The authors reported that the dose intensity arm did not produce improved outcomes in SCLC patients. Although some of these results seem encouraging, the evidence is neither clear nor sufficient to confidently recommend dose intensification. However, it is recognised that delays or dose reductions resulting in a lower cytotoxic dose intensity are likely to reduce the potential benefits of chemotherapy treatment.

11.5.6 Alternating versus sequential treatment strategies

Multi-drug regimens may be administered in two ways; either concurrently or alternately to maximise their potential for tumour eradication. The alternation of drugs acting through different (“non-cross resistant”) mechanisms was postulated to reduce the opportunity for drug resistance to develop, and expected to improve outcomes. This section will review the evidence for this in SCLC.

One systematic review reported outcomes relating to the appropriate timing and delivery of chemotherapy (Table 135). The ten RCTs within the systematic review analysed, together report that alternating chemotherapy regimens do not have a major effect on survival in limited stage patients (Level 1+). A sub-group analysis of the trials that used either CAV (Cyclophosphamide, Doxorubicin and Vincristine) or EP (Etoposide and Cisplatin) within the review produced mixed results (Table 135). While two of the trials, Fukuoka et al and Feld et al, reported that improved response and survival rates were seen with the alternating regimens, only one of the trials reported that these reached statistical significance. Goodman et al and Wolf et al on the other hand, reported that no difference in outcomes were seen in the alternating arm (Level 1+). Although some differences in effectiveness were seen in the regimens used and the duration of treatment, there is insufficient evidence to recommend alternating chemotherapy (Level 1+).

11.5.7 Second Line Chemotherapy

It is generally believed that second line chemotherapy will only be of benefit to patients if a good response is achieved by first line treatment. In addition, the best results are obtained in patients who have at least 3 months between the best response achieved and progression.

A systematic review was retrieved on the effectiveness of second line chemotherapy and no trials were retrieved to update this review. Gillenwater et al reviewed a number of single and combination regimens and reported that the overall response rates range from 4-46% for single agents and 18-72 for combination regimens (Table 136) (Level 1+). It should be noted that these response rates are at least as good as those for 1st line chemotherapy in advanced NSCLC.

In conclusion, the response rates and response duration that can be expected of second line treatment are generally poorer than those seen with 1st line treatment (Level 1+). As always, the burden of treatment on the patient should be considered when the magnitude of benefit is uncertain. Second line chemotherapy should be offered to patients who have achieved a response to first line treatment and discussed on an individual basis.

11.5.8 Conclusion

Chemotherapy is the initial treatment of choice for small cell lung cancer and can increase survival even in poor performance status patients. IV multi drug regimens and regimens containing platinum are superior. Initial chemotherapy should comprise 4-6 cycles of treatment as maintenance therapy has not consistently been shown to improve overall survival.

Relapse of disease can be treated by chemotherapy but second line treatment response rates are poorer and the balance of benefit and toxicity should be discussed with the individual patient. Those who responded well to first line treatment and who had a disease free interval respond best.

11.6 Radiotherapy

Small cell lung cancer is a radiosensitive tumour and thus radiotherapy plays an important role in its treatment. Radiotherapy given as part of the initial treatment program has the potential to increase disease control in irradiated sites and as relapse may sometimes be limited to the chest or brain, there is also the potential for radiotherapy to improve survival. Here we consider consolidation thoracic irradiation and prophylactic cranial irradiation. Lower dose palliative radiotherapy given for the relief of symptoms is covered in chapter 12.

11.6.1 Thoracic irradiation

One recent systematic review was retrieved on the effectiveness of thoracic radiotherapy. This review included seven randomised studies with over 100 limited disease patients (Table 137). While there is some heterogeneity in the results of these trials, they suggest a median survival benefit of approximately 1 month and a 6% improvement in 2-year survival with the addition of radiotherapy (chemotherapy alone: 13% vs. the addition of radiation: 19%) (Level 1+). In addition, a statistically significant improvement in local control was reported in all the studies although the manner in which each trial reported these results differed (Level 1+). Two earlier meta-analyses that were not limited to RCTs randomising over 100 patients have supported these findings (Table 127). The meta-analysis of 13 RCTs by Pignon et al showed that the addition of radiotherapy reduced the risk of death by 14% equivalent to a 5.4% increase in absolute 3-year survival. A similar improvement was shown in the meta-analysis of 11 studies by Warde and Payne (Level 1+).
In terms of intrathoracic control, in a meta-analysis of nine RCTs, Warde and Payne demonstrated an absolute improvement of 25% with the addition of radiotherapy, an improvement that was associated with a 1.2% absolute increase in the risk of treatment related mortality (Level 1+).

In a randomised study of thoracic irradiation in 210 patients with extensive stage SCLC achieving a complete response at distant sites and complete or partial response in the chest (mostly CT based), the addition of thoracic irradiation increased 5-year survival from 3.7% to 9.1%.

The majority of RCTs from which evidence of the effectiveness of thoracic irradiation is derived were carried out in the 1970s and 1980s when the standard method of response assessment was the chest x-ray. Most patients were eligible for these studies if they were deemed to have had a complete response to chemotherapy. CT is now recognised as being vastly superior to assessment by chest x-ray alone and will identify variable amounts of disease not apparent on chest x-ray. Indeed some patients included in these studies of limited disease may have had more widespread disease, which would have been defined as extensive by CT.

The situation is further complicated by the variety of ways in which thoracic irradiation can be delivered. Options include giving thoracic irradiation following completion of chemotherapy or with the final cycle of chemotherapy (i.e. "late") or earlier in the treatment programme, commonly concurrently with the first or second cycle of chemotherapy ("early"). There is also uncertainty regarding the optimal dose and fractionation of radiotherapy.

Patients with limited disease require discussion with a clinical oncologist prior to commencement of chemotherapy to assess the feasibility of subsequent thoracic irradiation. Disease should not be so bulky as to result in an unacceptable high risk of lung damage. As poorer survival has been observed in patients with SCLC who have treatment interruptions during radiotherapy or who smoke during radiotherapy, every effort should be made avoid these factors (see Table 139). Smoking during and after treatment is also discussed in chapter 13.

Patients with limited disease SCLC (and some with extensive disease SCLC) should therefore be considered for thoracic consolidation therapy if they have a CT based complete or a good partial response to chemotherapy.

11.6.1.1 Radiation dose and fractionation

A systematic review retrieved only one RCT that examined whether there was a dose response relationship for the addition of radiotherapy (Table 138) and one RCT comparing hyperfractionated with conventional radiotherapy (Table 139).

Coy et al randomised 168 patients who had either a complete response or partial response to chemotherapy to either 25Gy in 10 fractions over 2 weeks or 37.5Gy in 15 fractions over 3 weeks. Although there was no difference between the two arms in terms of complete response rate or overall survival, the higher dose arm did demonstrate an improvement in median local disease-free progression (11 months vs. 9 months, p=0.03) and in 2-year local disease-free progression survival (80% vs. 69%, p=0.03) (Level 1+).

Turnis et al randomised 417 patients to receive either 45Gy of twice-daily radiation (1.5Gy fractions) over a period of 3 weeks or daily radiation over 5 weeks (in fractions of 1.8Gy) with concurrent etoposide and cisplatin (Table 140). While a statistically significant difference in survival was reported in favour of the more intensive (i.e. hyperfractionated) arm, it is not clear whether this was due either to a higher biologically effective dose in the hyperfractionated arm, or the hyperfractionation or scheduling itself. The incidence of oesophagitis was also higher in the hyperfractionated arm.

A third RCT randomised 262 patients receiving 3 cycles of etoposide plus cisplatin to either once daily thoracic radiation (50-4Gy in 28 fractions) or twice daily 48Gy on 32 fractions. The authors also reported that there was no improvement with twice daily irradiation although it was not clear if the trial was powered to detect a difference.

While the optimal dose and fractionation of radiotherapy remains unclear, most clinical oncologists recommend a dose in the range of 40Gy/15 fractions over 3 weeks to 50Gy/25 fractions over 5 weeks. This dose has been used in an RCT of early versus late radiotherapy see Table 138.

11.6.1.2 Timing and sequencing of chemotherapy and radiotherapy

The optimum timing in the delivery of radiotherapy and chemotherapy remains uncertain. A systematic review included the results from five trials, in addition to two RCTs retrieved with more recent data (Table 141).

A single trial of alternating chemoradiotherapy with sequential treatment showed no significant difference between arms. The remaining trials compared early versus late radiotherapy using a range of radiotherapy doses and fractionation. In the "early" trials, radiotherapy was given concurrently with the first or second cycle of chemotherapy. In the remaining trials radiotherapy was delivered prior to commencement of chemotherapy. "Late" radiotherapy was given concurrently with the fourth to sixth cycle of chemotherapy except in two trials when it was given following completion of chemoradiotherapy. Two trials indicated a benefit for early radiotherapy. Two trials updated this review. While Skarlos et al reported that the sample was small and there was no significant difference in findings, Takada et al reported that while there were no significant differences in median survival or PFS, there was a trend in trend in favour of the concurrent arm.

Since conducting this review a recent Cochrane review (unpublished at the time of writing) has found that there was no statistically significant difference between early and late radiotherapy and between concurrent and sequential chemoradiotherapy for SCLC. A conclusion cannot therefore be made specifying the optimal timing and sequencing of chemotherapy and radiotherapy for SCLC patients.

11.6.2 Prophylactic Cranial Irradiation

The central nervous system is a recognised sanctuary site for micrometastases and cytotoxic drugs penetrate the blood-brain barrier poorly. Isolated brain metastases are an important cause of failure in those who have had a complete response to initial therapy. Prophylactic cranial irradiation (PCI) attempts to eradicate microscopic disease in patients without symptoms of brain metastasis. The aim is to treat the group with highest risk of the brain being the sole site of metastasis, as they are the ones who could benefit from PCI. PCI is therefore usually considered for patients with limited disease who have had a complete or good partial response to primary treatment.

There is less evidence pertaining to the effectiveness of PCI in patients with extensive disease.

11.6.2.1 Effectiveness

Studies conducted during the 1970s and 1980s on the effectiveness of PCI provide limited data due to the lack of statistical power of the randomised data. In addition, these studies were based on patients with complete response judged by chest x-ray. A systematic review was retrieved and there were no RCTs to update this evidence (Table 142). This meta-analysis of 987 patients randomised in 7 RCTs concluded that while PCI reduces the risk of brain metastasis by 5%, the risk of death is reduced by...
116.2.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, limited disease SCLC patients should be considered for PCI if they have a CT based complete or a good partial response to primary treatment. Benefit is unclear for patients with extensive disease and the guideline development group recommended that these patients should be entered into clinical trials.

There is insufficient evidence to recommend a definite dose schedule.

11.7 Surgery for patients with SCLC

The majority of patients with SCLC present with systemic disease precluding surgery with curative intent. The role of surgery in SCLC is limited and to very specific groups of patients. Patients may undergo a surgical procedure and only on examination of the operative specimen the disease may appear to be SCLC or planned treatment may very occasionally be offered to patients with stage I SCLC usually after neo-adjuvant chemotherapy. Surgery has been used as a salvage treatment for those patients who have either relapsed or failed to respond to primary treatment involving chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

SIGN retrieved one RCT and three observational trials that reported results on the addition of chemotherapy to surgery. Lad et al. reported results from an RCT on the addition of surgical resection of the primary tumour following a complete or partial response to chemotherapy (see Table 143). As the authors point out, the 146 patients randomised were an unusually favourable population (82% of patients were PS 0–1 on the KPS scale, 92% had lost ≤ 10% body weight), this is reflected in the overall survival rate of 43% (Level 1–++). Comparing the two treatment groups, pulmonary resection did not influence the pattern of relapse and survival actually favoured the non-surgical group by three months (Level 1–++).

Table 143 shows three further observational studies. Although the results of the trials reporting results on patients undergoing postoperative chemotherapy were favourable in terms of survival time, they were also conducted on small groups of atypical patients with less advanced disease (Level 2–++).

In summary, there is insufficient evidence to recommend surgery for this group of patients.

11.8 Economics of the treatment of SCLC

Four studies were selected for tabulation (Table 144 and Table 145). Since the treatment of side-effects of chemotherapy is out of the scope of this guideline, we excluded studies on haematopoietic growth factors which were being used for treatment of chemotherapy side effects (reducing infections and neutropenic fever). Most of the remaining evidence was limited in terms of the treatments compared and was mainly concerned with chemotherapy.

11.8.1 Single agent / multiple agent Chemotherapy

Khan et al. conducted a cost analysis on the use of carboplatin versus cisplatin in treatment of patients with NSCLC, SCLC and ovarian cancer to determine which treatment has potential cost savings. The results showed that chemotherapy with cisplatin was less costly ($203) than carboplatin for limited and extensive stage of SCLC patients. Hospitalisation costs ($574 ± 1397 with carboplatin, $475 ± 858 with cisplatin) and costs for chemotherapy agents ($7280 ± 2685 for carboplatin, 5507 ± 3725 for cisplatin) were higher with carboplatin treatment than treatment with cisplatin. Costs of growth factors ($992 ± 2586 with carboplatin, $1448 ± 3266 for cisplatin) were higher for cisplatin. The results should be treated with caution due to high standard errors reported associated with each cost category and small number of patients in the study.

The applicability of the results to the UK practice is uncertain: carboplatin is given as an outpatient basis in the UK and growth factors are not typically used.

The objective of Doyle et al. study was to identify whether the use of etoposide phosphate with cisplatin due to its ease of administration resulted in cost-savings compared to etoposide with cisplatin. The analysis was based on clinical data obtained from a randomised controlled trial of cisplatin plus either etoposide phosphate or etoposide. The use of etoposide phosphate saved £737 per patient. When the time savings of ease of administration of etoposide phosphate were added into the model, use of etoposide phosphate reduced the cost per patient by £2,897.

11.8.2 Alternating versus sequential chemotherapy treatment

A cost-effectiveness analysis on sequential versus alternating chemotherapy was conducted alongside a two year randomised controlled trial of cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin and vincristine alone or alternating with etoposide and cisplatin for the treatment of patients with extensive SCLC. The use of alternating chemotherapy was associated with increased survival (0.13 years) and improved quality of life (0.10 QALY) with Can$4,500 (£1808) with alternating chemotherapy. The cost effectiveness of alternating chemotherapy was favourable when compared with standard chemotherapy. However, the clinical evidence did not show clear overall results in favour of alternating chemotherapy (see section 11.5.6).

11.8.3 Platinum versus non-platinum containing regimens: an original cost-effectiveness analysis

The literature search identified no economic studies that compared platinum based drugs regimens with non-platinum based drugs for SCLC. Therefore we conducted a simple cost-effectiveness analysis based on a well-conducted RCT as follows.

Sundstrom et al. reported a Norwegian RCT with five-year follow-up. The data were analysed separately for limited and extensive disease. The regimens compared were:

- Etoposide and cisplatin (EP) (up to 5 courses):
  - Day 1 IV – etoposide 100mg/m2 & cisplatin 75mg/m2
  - Days 2&4 oral – etoposide 200mg/m2

- Cyclophosphamide etoposide vincristine (CEV) (up to 5 courses):
  - Day 1 IV – epirubicin 50mg/m2, cyclophosphamide 1000 mg/m2, vincristine 2 mg/m2

Most patients had the full five cycles and the main reason for failure to complete was death. Patients with limited disease the trial reported significantly longer survival for EP. There was no significant between-arm difference in quality of life or in use of radiotherapy or prophylactic cranial irradiation.

Drug costs were taken from the British National Formulary (assuming body surface area = 1.8m2) – see Table 146. The other assumptions are listed in Table 147.

Platinum-based drug regimens appear to be cost-effective for patients with both limited and extensive SCLC (compared with a threshold of £30,000 per QALY gained) – see Table 148 and Table 149. The sensitivity analysis (Table 150) suggests that the results for patients with limited disease are robust to
changes in the model parameters. The results for extensive disease would be much more sensitive due to the lack of significance in the treatment effect.

These results may be imprecise because actual hospital utilization was not measured. Also, although there were no significant differences in either radiotherapy or prophylactic cranial irradiation there may have been other differences not recorded by the trial, e.g. additional costs associated with treating side-effects, additional services during extended years of life or perhaps patient costs. The trial was not conducted on a UK population but there is no reason to assume that treatment effect would be markedly different.

11.8.4 Prophylactic Cranial Irradiation (PCI)
The clinical and cost-effectiveness of PCI was investigated using ten year retrospective data of patients with limited SCLC who had achieved a complete remission. The mean overall survival improved by 13.5 months (11.2 months quality-adjusted) when PCI was used in conjunction with chemotherapy and radiotherapy. This strategy was cost-effective, the cost per LY gained was Can$840 (£350) and cost per QALY was Can$1,020 (£423). These results must be treated with caution because the improvement implied by the Cochrane review (13.5 months) was much greater than the improvement in survival from this small study (13.5 months) was much greater than the improvement implied by the Cochrane review (4 months using the DEALE method). This would still be cost-effective compared with a cost per life-year threshold of say £20,000 as long as the incremental cost of PCI is below £6,000.

11.8.5 Conclusions and discussion
The economic evidence indicated that:

- platinum-based drug regimens can be cost-effective, especially for patients with limited disease
- cisplatin was found to be slightly less costly than carboplatin in one US study
- the use of PCI in conjunction with chemotherapy and radiotherapy appears to be cost-effective

The results should be interpreted cautiously because they were based on trials conducted outside the UK NHS. Hence treatment effects, resource outcomes and especially prices may not strictly be applicable. Furthermore, most of the studies did not report the clinical outcomes separately for the stage of disease.

11.9 Recommendations
11.9.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations
Patients with SCLC should be offered an assessment that includes evaluation of the major prognostic factors: performance status, serum lactate dehydrogenase, liver function tests, serum sodium, and stage. (D)

All patients with SCLC should be offered:

- platinum-based chemotherapy (A)
- multidrug regimens, because they are more effective and have a lower toxicity than single-agent regimens. (A)

Four to six cycles of chemotherapy should be offered to patients whose disease responds. Maintenance treatment is not recommended. (A)

Patients with limited-stage SCLC should be offered thoracic irradiation concurrently with the first or second cycle of chemotherapy or following completion of chemotherapy if there has been at least a good partial response within the thorax. For patients with extensive disease, thoracic irradiation should be considered following chemotherapy if there has been a complete response at distant sites and at least a good partial response within the thorax. (A)

Patients undergoing consolidation thoracic irradiation should receive a dose in the range of 40 Gy in 15 fractions over 3 weeks to 50 Gy in 25 fractions over 5 weeks. (DGPPP)

Patients with limited disease and complete or good partial response after primary treatment should be offered prophylactic cranial irradiation. (A)

Second-line chemotherapy should be offered to patients at relapse only if their disease responded to first-line chemotherapy. The benefits are less than those of first-line chemotherapy. (DGPPP)

11.9.2 Research Recommendations
Clinical trials should be conducted to determine to benefit of prophylactic cranial irradiation compared to no prophylactic treatment in terms of survival and quality or life for patients with extensive disease SCLC and a complete response at distant metastatic sites and a complete or good partial response within the thorax after treatment.
12 Palliative Interventions and Supportive and Palliative Care

12.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on palliative interventions and supportive and palliative care specifically for patients with lung cancer. This is a priority because most patients diagnosed with lung cancer have incurable disease and while effective treatment is often available, symptoms are often poorly evaluated and managed. It is essential therefore, that the impact of lung cancer and its symptoms on the patient’s psychological, social and physical state including activities of daily living are identified early and that patients are referred to the appropriate specialist for further assessment, if required. In this chapter we have reviewed the evidence on palliative interventions and palliative care specific to lung cancer patients. This chapter will also highlight supportive care services, including communication, in relation to patients with lung cancer which are important throughout the patient’s journey.

12.1.1 Improving Supportive and Palliative Care for Adults with Cancer
The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) has recently published guidance and recommendations to improve supportive and palliative care for adults with cancer. This guidance should be used alongside this document.

The guidance provides an evidence base for how services should be organised and delivered using cancer networks to improve the care of patients with cancer. The guidance encompasses co-ordination of care, user involvement, face-to-face communication, information, psychological support services, social support services, spiritual support services, general palliative care services (including the care of dying patients), specialist palliative care services, rehabilitation services, complementary therapy services, services for families and carers (including bereavement care) and workforce development. It is based on the following principles of both supportive and palliative care:

Supportive care:
• helps the patient and their family to cope with cancer and treatment of it – from pre-diagnosis, through the process of diagnosis and treatment, to cure, continuing illness or death and into bereavement. It helps the patient to maximise the benefits of treatment and to live as well as possible with the effects of the disease. It is given equal priority alongside diagnosis and treatment.

It covers a range of issues relevant to people with cancer and their carers, including:
> self help and support
> user involvement
> information giving
> psychological support
> symptom control
> social support
> rehabilitation e.g. appliance officers, dietitians.
> complementary therapies
> spiritual support
> palliative care
> end of life and bereavement care.

Palliative care is:
• the active holistic care of patients with advanced progressive illness. Management of pain and other symptoms and provision of psychological, social and spiritual support is paramount. The goal of palliative care is achievement of the best quality of life for patients and their families. Many aspects of palliative care are also applicable earlier in the course of the illness in conjunction with other treatments.

Palliative care is based on the following principles:
> To provide relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
> Integrate the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care
> Offer a support system to help patients to live as actively as possible until death and to help the family cope during the patient’s illness and in their own bereavement
> Be applied early in the course of illness in conjunction with other therapies to prolong life (such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy), including investigations to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications

The professions involved in providing these services and aims, fall into 2 distinct categories:
> Those providing day-to-day care to patients and carers in the community or in hospitals.
> Those who specialize in palliative care (consultants in palliative medicine and clinical nurse specialists in palliative care for example), some of whom are accredited specialists.

Specialist palliative care teams require:
> palliative medicine consultants
> palliative care nurse specialists
> a team secretary/administrator

and a range of expertise provided by:
> physiotherapists
> occupational therapists
> dietitians
> pharmacists
> social workers
> chaplains/spiritual care givers
> professionals able to deliver psychological support as defined by the NICE guideline on Supportive and Palliative Care.

The Guideline Development Group strongly supports this guidance, in particular, the emphasis on:
> The responsibility of all professionals to provide high quality ‘general’ supportive and palliative care
> The need for a multidisciplinary approach
> The importance of good communication
> The timely involvement of specialist services when patients supportive and palliative care needs are not being met.

12.1.2 Common symptoms of lung cancer
Common symptoms of lung cancer include fatigue, loss of appetite, weight loss, breathlessness, cough, haemoptysis, hoarseness, chest pain, bone pain, spinal cord compression, brain metastases and superior vena cava obstruction. Thracic symptoms have been subdivided into management of dyspnoea (breathlessness), including malignant pleural effusion, non-obstructive airway symptoms (cough, haemoptysis, hoarseness and chest pain) and superior vena cava obstruction. Neurological symptoms include those arising from brain metastases and spinal cord compression. The treatment of bone pain and pathological fractures is covered under a section on bone metastases. No specific evidence on the treatment of pain has been
The GDG are aware that the methodology followed would like to stress:

12.2 Tools included in this review

Many techniques are included in this review, reflecting the diversity of symptoms, underlying causes and treatments available:

- Communication with patients with lung cancer
- Management of dyspnoea (breathlessness): bronchoscopy, laser treatment, photodynamic therapy, stents, treatments for breathlessness caused by malignant pleural effusion (pleural drainage, thoracentesis and pleurodesis by sclerotherapy agents), cryotherapy, brachytherapy, external beam radiotherapy and non-drug methods (e.g. psychosocial support, breathing control methods, coping strategies)
- Management of cough: palliative radiotherapy for cough and haemoptysis, antitussive therapy (opioids), treatment for cough caused by malignant pleural effusion (pleural drainage, thoracentesis and pleurodesis by sclerotherapy agents)
- Management of hoarseness: surgery
- Management of chest pain: palliative radiotherapy and treatment for chest pain caused by pleural disease
- Management of superior vena cava obstruction: chemotherapy or radiotherapy or both; stents, steroids
- Management of neurological symptoms (brain metastases): corticosteroids, whole brain radiotherapy, surgery and chemotherapy
- Management of pain caused by spinal cord compression: corticosteroids and radiotherapy; and surgery

The guideline development group felt they should highlight the importance of prompt referral and treatment for specialist palliative care services and made the following good practice points:

- Patients who may benefit from specialist palliative care services should be identified and referred without delay

12.3 Methodology

The search for evidence of the effectiveness of palliative interventions was undertaken by NCC-AC and is in appendix six. The search for palliative care and communication was carried out by SIGN, and is in appendix six.

The search for the evidence referred to in this chapter was restricted to patients with lung cancer. The Guideline Development Group’s collaborators, SIGN, found no research evidence assessing the effectiveness of different treatments for symptoms such as weight loss, loss of appetite, difficulty with swallowing and depression, specific to lung cancer patients but the GDG wanted to make good practice points as specific treatments are available for lung cancer patients which are detailed in section 12.13.

12.4 Communication

No evidence regarding the information needs of lung cancer patients specifically was retrieved by the SIGN literature search. In the light of recommendations from sources based on other patient groups however, the guideline development group wanted to make good practice points. The group also felt that communication was such an important issue that the recommendations made should appear early on in the guideline and as such, they can be found in the Access to Services chapter (3.6).

Government guidelines state that patients and their carers should be offered accurate, clear, full and prompt information that is culturally sensitive in both verbal and other means accessible to the patient, at every stage of the care pathway. Good communication and adequate information can help reduce anger and anxiety, and improve patient confidence. Information needs will vary depending on the particular patient, their age and individual knowledge base, carer, stage of disease, and performance status.

The Nursing Contribution to Cancer Care (2002) states that for site-specific cancers in a cancer unit or cancer centre, a clinical nurse specialist should be provided to support patients and carers.

12.4.1 Discussions at diagnosis:

Ideally the patient’s partner or family member should be present, unless the patient specifically requests otherwise, in addition to a nurse or another healthcare professional. Information, both verbal and written (supported by any other format the patient prefers), should include, whenever possible, details of the stage of disease, treatment options...
USEFUL LUNG CANCER PATIENT INFORMATION AND SUPPORT RESOURCES

There are many ways of finding out more about lung cancer. There are many booklets and internet sites available. Below are a few examples:

1. USEFUL INFORMATION BOOKLETS ON LUNG CANCER
   The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation
   Freephone 0800 358 7200
   Booklets –
   "So You Have Just Been Told You Have Lung Cancer" (Personal thoughts from lung cancer patients and carers designed to address initial questions after diagnosis)
   "Lung Cancer – Answering Your Questions" (A 50 page booklet answering most of the commonly asked questions relating to lung cancer)
   Cancer BACUP
   Freephone 0808 800 1234
   Booklets –
   "Understanding Cancer of the Lung" and other booklets on many aspects of cancer treatment and care, including Complimentary Therapies, Fatigue, Hair Loss and Diet.
   British Lung Foundation
   Leaflet –
   "Living with Lung cancer: The facts (Nov 2002)" This leaflet explains what lung cancer is, and provides information on diagnostic tests and treatment. Copy free with an SAE to the British lung foundation, 73-75 Goswell Road, London, EC1V 7ER. www.lunguk.org/index

2. USEFUL BOOKLETS ON SYMPTOM CONTROL AND PALLIATIVE CARE
   Cancer BACUP
   Freephone 0808 800 1234
   A number of booklets specifically for symptom control such as "Controlling symptoms of cancer" and "Controlling pain" and "Dying with Cancer" looking at practical and emotional issues that surround dying with cancer. Also, "Coping at home: caring for someone with advanced cancer" which is about services that can be accessed in the community. Also see the "Q&A" section that covers different questions on lung cancer. www.bacup.org.uk

3. USEFUL INFORMATION ON BREATHLESSNESS
   Cancer BACUP
   Freephone 0808 800 1234
   Factsheet – "Management of Breathlessness".

The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation
Freephone 0800 358 7200
Booklet – "A Practical Guide To Breathlessness", Video – "Take A Breather"
4. **SOME USEFUL WEBSITES**

It is difficult to monitor the quality of information on a website. If in doubt, patients should ask their nurse or doctor for further clarification on good websites that might be appropriate for their situation.

- www.bacup.org.uk
- www.rocycastle.org
- www.lungcanceronline.org
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- www.patient.co.uk
- www.roycastle.org
- www.cancerresearchuk.org
- www.graylab.ac.uk
- www.macmillan.org.uk
- www.mariecurie.org.uk
- www.alcase.org
- www.patient.co.uk
- www.dipex.org

5. **ADDITIONAL LUNG CANCER PATIENT SUPPORT**

There are many different organisations which work with the NHS to provide support and information for lung cancer patients. Listed below are a few such organisations:

- **The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation**
  - Network of monthly Lung Cancer Patient Support Groups. Through its Information Line, provides contact details for local lung cancer nurses throughout the UK.
  - Freephone Helpline 0800 358 7200.

- **Benefit Enquiry Line**
  - Provides information and advice about social security benefit entitlement
  - Freephone 0800 88 22 00

- **Cancer BACUP**
  - Helps patients, their families and friends, to live with cancer. For information and support from cancer nurses, freephone 0808 800 1234.

- **Macmillan Cancer Relief**
  - Services include Macmillan Nurses, doctors, cancer care and information units. Also, financial help for individuals, through patient grants.
  - Information Line 0845 601 6161.
  - The Macmillan CancerLine is open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm on freephone 0808 800 1234.

- **Cancer Care**
  - Runs hospice centres throughout the UK, and a community nursing service to support cancer patients and their carers in their homes.
  - Telephone 0207 599 7777

- **The British Lung Foundation**
  - Runs a network of Breathe Easy Patient Support Groups for patients with all types of lung disease.
  - Telephone 020 7688 5555

- **The NHS Smoking Helpline**
  - Offers down to earth help and advice to people who want to stop smoking.
  - Freephone 0800 358 7200

12.5 **Management of Dyspnoea (Breathlessness)**

12.5.1 Introduction

Three-quarters of lung cancer patients experience dyspnoea at some time and this rises to around 90% in their last month of life644. It has a number of causes and is a distressing and sometimes life threatening symptom, the palliation of which can be of major benefit to the patient644. Each treatment is appropriate for a slightly different group of patients and is discussed independently. The effectiveness of non-drug interventions is assessed alongside medical treatments. The effectiveness of surgery is not reviewed as no evidence was retrieved.

Where malignant pleural effusion is the underlying cause it should be treated as described in section 12.5.6 below.

12.5.2 Physical De-bulking via the Rigid Bronchoscopy

Although rigid bronchoscopy (including the mechanical removal of the tumour) has been undertaken for several decades, there is relatively little published data reporting detailed outcomes. A single, recent systematic review505 was retrieved, which described one case series of rigid bronchoscopy for lung cancer patients (see Table 151). Of the 56 patients, 62% were treated electively and 86% had mostly endoluminal tumours involving the trachea, carina, or main stem bronchi. The study reported a success rate of 91%, measured by both symptomatic assessment and bronchoscopy. The effectiveness of surgery is not reviewed as no evidence was retrieved.

12.5.3 Laser Treatment

Historically the CO2 laser was first used to treat airway lesions. This method suffers from a limited ability to coagulate bleeding and can only be transmitted in a straight line. Most of the published data involves the use of the Nd/YAG laser, which can be transmitted through a flexible or rigid bronchoscope.

Our search identified a single, recent systematic review461 reporting four case series (which total more than 2,500 patients) achieving palliation of dyspnoea in 80% of patients (see Table 152). Success was influenced by the location of the tumour. 70-95% of patients with central lesions, 40-60% of patients with lobar obstruction and 57% of patients with complete occlusion of the airway (Level 3). Almost all patients had endoluminal tumours while patients with extrinsic compression were generally excluded. Symptom relief was measured using a combination of symptomatic assessment and bronchoscopy. This procedure was reported to have a mortality of 0.4%-3% and complications, including haemorrhage, in 3% of cases462. Between 50-60% of patients were retreated 3-4 months later; median survival was 6 months463 (Level 3).

12.5.4 Photodynamic Therapy

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) involves the administration of a photosensitiser, which is taken up by tumour cells. Subsequent exposure to light of a particular wavelength induces cell death. Light from PDT is reported to penetrate to a depth of 5-10mm, making tracheobronchial tumours well suited to this treatment. Routine bronchoscopic debridement typically follows treatment.

Our search identified two systematic reviews505, 186 and a recent case series. The first systematic review identified two case series meeting its inclusion criteria of having more than fifty patients645. The second review incorporated 12 case series646 with a total of 636 patients (see Table 153). One large study (175 patients) was included in both reviews. The first review found that photodynamic therapy temporarily palliated breathlessness in 60% of patients although palliation is much higher (80%) in patients with strictly endoluminal tumours (Level 3). There is a 4% one month mortality rate and 2% risk of major haemorrhage465 (Level 3). The second review reported skin photosensitivity (sunburn) in 5%-28%, haemoptysis in up to 18% in addition to...
post-treatment cough, expectation of necrotic debris and dyspnoea which were noted by many authors. Nevertheless it concluded that almost all patients had relief of dyspnoea and cough along with an improvement in lung function. The recent study, a prospective case series of 40 patients, used P01 with hyperbaric oxygen and reported improved dyspnoea in all but one patient and improved haemoptysis in 10 of the 12 patients experiencing this510 (Level 3).

12.5.5 Stents
A number of airway stents are available for the palliation of dyspnoea. These include silastic stents for the trachea or main stem bronchi, silastic Y stents for use at the carinal level and expandable metal stents that can be used in the trachea and the main bronchi. Stents are commonly used in patients with endoluminal obstruction and extrinsic compression.

Our search identified a recent systematic review (describing three case series) and a further two case series505,510 (see Table 154). The systematic review505 reported the success rate of endoluminal stents in three case series (413 patients) to be 90%. The majority of patients had central tumours and severe obstruction (Level 3). Stents placed at lobar level are often not as successful as those placed for central lesions505. The mortality of the procedure is reported as 0% to 7% with complications such as stent migration and mucus retention occurring in 10-20% of patients (Level 3). These high levels of relief have also been observed in later case series of 34 and 14 patients with the most severe levels of breathlessness (for example as an emergency procedure505,508,510 (Table 154).

12.5.6 Pleural Effusion
Breathlessness due to pleural effusion may be relieved by needle aspiration or more completely by drainage with a tube left indwelling for a period of time. Recurrence in days or weeks is common, so symptomatic relief is usually temporary. Any symptomatic benefit gained may be extended by pleurodesis. Our review of the literature found no data on the use of pleural drainage or pleurodesis that was specific to lung cancer. However, we identified one guideline510 and two systematic reviews511,512 that examined pleural effusion in mixed populations (Table 155).

Recent guidelines by the British Thoracic Society512 covered the management of malignant primary pleural effusions resulting from various primary tumours. Based on the evidence from their literature search and the experience of the expert group they found that chest tube drainage via an intercostal tube should be considered as the first line of treatment followed by chemical pleurodesis, for patients where a chest x-ray shows that there is complete lung re-expansion512 (Level 1+). Our guideline development group considered that this result, based on a general population of patients with malignant pleural effusion, could be applied to lung cancer patients. However, lung cancer patients are more likely to have a collapsed or obstructed and therefore non-functioning lung and drainage of fluid may not lead to an improvement in breathlessness. The grade of the recommendation has therefore been extrapolated to a Grade B to reflect this.

A recent Cochrane systematic review512 examined the results from 36 RCIs on pleurodesis and a systematic review by Tan et al512 examined 227 papers (including 45 RCIs and 98 observational studies) on pleurodesis. The Cochrane review512 concluded that there was evidence for three statements (Level 1++):

> A sclerosant instilled into the pleural space is more effective than placebo or tube drainage alone.

> Talc was associated with less recurrence than any other agent.

> Thoracoscopic pleurodesis was more effective than bedside tube pleurodesis where talc was used.

The systematic review by Tan et al512 concluded similarly on these questions but was a more exhaustive review of the details of implementation and provides further details (Level 1+). A more extended period of drainage was not more effective than earlier tube removal.

> Rolling and tipping the patient does not confer advantage.

> Tube size is not important. Smaller tubes are as effective as larger ones.

No data specific to lung cancer were found; most studies included a mixture of patients and did not break down the results by disease. Both reviews found that talc was the most effective agent. Again, the Guideline Development Group considered that it was reasonable to apply this finding to lung cancer patients although the recommendation would be downgraded to a grade B to reflect the fact that the target population of the studies was not specifically lung cancer patients.

12.5.7 Cryotherapy
Cryotherapy is the rapid freezing of tissue, which destroys tumour cells then debried over several bronchoscopic procedures. Our search identified a recent systematic review512 that described three case series (411 patients) (See Table 156). Palliation was 65-68%, with greater palliation in patients with central lesions compared to those with peripheral lesions (60% vs. 35% respectively). There is currently no data on the durability of results512 (Level 3).

12.5.8 Brachytherapy
Brachytherapy is the delivery of radiation from an endobronchial source. A catheter is placed across the lesion, loaded with the appropriate radiation source, and this remains in place until the prescribed dose has been delivered.

Our search identified three RCIs513,519,520 on the effectiveness of endobronchial brachytherapy alone (see Table 157), although one was underpowered to detect any differences in the treatments compared. Stout et al519 randomised patients to either endobronchial brachytherapy or external radiotherapy and reported that both treatments produced good levels of symptomatic relief although they were better for external radiotherapy at the expense of more acute morbidity. While late side effects were similar, improved survival was recorded in the radiotherapy arm, which was statistically significant (Level 1++). One other trial was retrieved which combined endobronchial brachytherapy with radiotherapy. Langendijk et al519 reported that the combination of techniques provides higher rates of expansion of collapsed lung resulting in transient lower levels of dyspnoea and importantly, there is no significant increased risk of fatal haemoptysis.

12.5.9 External Beam Radiotherapy
External beam radiotherapy is the most common palliative treatment modality, received by between 20-30% of patients with lung cancer517. Our search identified two systematic reviews515 and one RCT518 (See Table 158). The first, a Cochrane systematic review515 of ten randomised controlled trials compared different radiotherapy regimens (See Table 158). This found that symptoms improved under all regimes. There was no strong evidence that higher dosages gave greater palliation overall (lack of consistent reporting and assessment in the individual trials prohibit greater detail) although there was evidence of greater toxicity with higher doses. Recommended dosages are 10 Gy in one fraction or 16-17 Gy in 2 fractions although there is some evidence that higher doses produce a modest survival benefit in patients with good performance status (Level 1++). The more recent review516 did not identify any additional studies. A recent randomised controlled trial517 of 230 patients comparing 10 Gy in a single fraction or 30 Gy in five fractions found similar levels of symptom relief (Level 1+).

12.5.10 Non-drug treatment
SIGN identified one recent UK RCT517 assessing the effectiveness of a nurse-led clinic for the palliation of breathlessness that offered breathing control, activity pacing, relaxation techniques and psychosocial support (see Table 159). The weekly clinic was compared with best supportive care over an 8 week period. Performance status and symptoms universally deteriorated in the control group but were generally maintained in the intervention group. This was statistically significant for five of the 11 outcome measures; breathlessness at rest (Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) scale), performance status, depression (Hospital Anxiety and Depression (HAD) scale), physical symptoms (Rotterdam symptom checklist) and an activity subscale (Rotterdam symptom checklist). The research group considered the mechanism may be the emphasis on teaching more effective ways of coping with breathlessness and
the opportunity to talk about difficult feelings and concerns. Such non-drug approaches appear to be of benefit to patients with dyspnoea (Level 1+).

The Guideline Development Group considers that such non-drug treatments should be delivered by a multidisciplinary team, facilitated or co-ordinated by a professional with an interest in breathlessness and the necessary expertise in the techniques (e.g. nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist or other).

Although it may be provided within a breathlessness clinic, patients should have access to such support wherever they are. In addition, there is scope to improve the efficacy of non-drug treatments and this is an area that requires further research.

12.5.11 Summary of management of dyspnoea

Comparison between the treatments is not straightforward because evidence is typically from non-randomised retrospective studies, outcomes are not measured systematically and many patients receive more than one type of intervention. Unfortunately a MRC randomised trial designed to answer this question failed to recruit sufficient patients\(^{534}\). The authors of the systematic review\(^{535,536}\) that identified the most evidence on each intervention concluded that the acute mortality and morbidity for all the interventions for obstructive airway management are similar\(^{536}\) (Level 3). Our search identified a single randomised trial comparing endobronchial brachytherapy with external radiation for the relief of breathlessness, cough and haemoptysis\(^{537,538}\) (see Table 160). This found that both treatments relieved symptoms of cough, haemoptysis and breathlessness (58%, 85% and 78% for endobronchial brachytherapy, and 59%, 90% and 66% for external radiotherapy respectively). Median survival was higher with external radiotherapy (287 vs. 250 days). Interestingly, 28% of those receiving external radiotherapy went on to have endobronchial treatment at a median 304 days whereas 51% of those in the endobronchial group subsequently had external radiotherapy (at a median 125 days) (Level 1+).

In deciding the best course of treatment for a patient presenting with dyspnoea the authors of the recent systematic review\(^{539}\) described above concluded the following issues should be considered (Level 4):

- **Location of obstruction:** trachea, main stem bronchus, bronchus intermedius, lobar, segmental
- **Nature of obstruction:** endoluminal, mixed, extrinsic
- **Urgency**
- **Technical issues:** ease for patient, durability of relief, availability of equipment and expertise, depth of penetration into tissue.

Whether or not the above interventions are undertaken, non-drug approaches appear to benefit patients with dyspnoea.

12.6 Management of Cough

Four in five lung cancer patients (79%) experience cough and a third (35%) experience haemoptysis\(^{504,520}\). Cough may also be a symptom of malignant pleural effusion. Cough is also reduced by palliative radiotherapy, both external and endoluminal. There is no strong evidence that higher doses of radiotherapy are associated with better or longer lasting palliation\(^{537,539}\). Cough caused by malignant pleural effusion can be treated as discussed in section 12.5.6 above.

12.6.2 Antitussive therapy for cough

Our search identified a systematic review on the management of cough\(^{539}\) and a later double-blind, randomised controlled trial (see Table 161).

Each randomised, double-blind, placebo controlled trial within the systematic review had 79 patients and compared codeine and dextromethorphan to placebo. Both found cough reduced significantly (Level 1++). The later randomised controlled trial\(^{524}\) of 140 lung cancer patients with a documented history of non-productive cough (at least 5 coughs per hour) compared the effectiveness of a non-opioid (although levodropropazine is not available in the UK) to an opioid antitussive (Level 1+). Cough severity scores (graded by both the patient and assessor) showed a significant decrease with treatment but no significant difference between the drugs. Opioid and non-opioid anti-tussives are effective in the treatment of cough (Level 1+). In UK clinical practice, generally codeine is used, and if ineffective, substituted for morphine.

12.6.3 Pleural drainage, thoracentesis and pleurodesis for malignant pleural effusion

Management of cough and haemoptysis (among a group of undifferentiated symptoms) are improved by palliative radiotherapy, both endoluminal and external. There is no strong evidence that higher doses of radiotherapy are associated with better or longer lasting palliation\(^{537,539}\). Cough caused by malignant pleural effusion can be treated as discussed in section 12.5.6 above.

12.6.4 Summary of management of cough

Cough and haemoptysis (among a group of undifferentiated symptoms) are improved by palliative radiotherapy, both endoluminal and external. There is no strong evidence that higher doses of radiotherapy are associated with better or longer lasting palliation\(^{537,539}\). Cough caused by malignant pleural effusion can be treated as discussed in section 12.5.6 above.

12.7 Management of Hoarseness

About one in ten patients experience some hoarseness of their voice (11%)\(^{504}\). Our search identified only one, uncontrolled, trial of a surgical treatment (vocal cord medialisation for unilateral paralysis) which improved symptoms of hoarseness\(^{523}\) (Level 3) (see Table 165). The Guideline Development Group observed hoarseness due to left recurrent laryngeal nerve involvement very rarely responds to external beam radiotherapy and recommends that cases should be referred to an ear nose and throat specialist for assessment.

12.8 Chest pain

A third of patients (37%) experience chest pain during their last 12 months of life, rising to approximately half during the last month\(^{445}\). Pain should be evaluated carefully in order to identify the underlying cause and provide the most appropriate treatment. Management includes explanation of the symptom to the patient (also addressing their concerns), treating the underlying cause when possible, (e.g. radiotherapy) non-drug and drug approaches. If pain is not progressively improving over a 1-2 week period (less if severe), advice should be obtained from specialists in palliative care or pain.

12.9 Superior Vena Cava Obstruction

12.9.1 Introduction

Superior Vena Cava Obstruction (SVCO) is due either to a tumour arising in the right main or upper lobe bronchus or by the presence of bulky mediastinal lymph nodes typically arising from the right paratracheal or pre-carinal stations. It causes oedema of the face, neck and arms. Distended veins over the chest are also usually apparent. SVCO is present at diagnosis in 10% of patients with SCLC and 1.7% of patients with NSCLC\(^{532}\). Traditional management of SVCO includes systemic corticosteroids (e.g. dexamethasone) and either radiotherapy (more commonly used for NSCLC) or chemotherapy (generally for SCLC). More recently, with the development of endovascular stenting, an expandable stent placed percutaneously in the SVC to relieve compression and restore blood flow, has been increasingly used. Our search identified a recent Cochrane systematic review\(^{540}\) (see Table 162) on the treatment of SVCO by steroids, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and stents which drew on two randomised trials and 44 non-randomised studies, most of which were retrospective.
12.9.2 Chemotherapy and/or Radiotherapy

The Cochrane review identified two relevant randomised trials. Based predominantly on non-randomised trials the review found that chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy relieved SVCO in 77% of patients with SCLC. Of those treated, 17% had a recurrence of SVCO. In NSCLC, chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy relieved SVCO in 60%, with 19% of those treated having a recurrence. In addition, the review noted that rates of relief of SVCO were very similar for chemotherapy and for radiotherapy in both cell types; 77% and 78% respectively for SCLC and 59% and 63% in NSCLC. Effectiveness was not clearly related to any particular radiotherapy fractionation schedule or chemotherapy regimen (Level 2+).

12.9.3 Stents

The Cochrane review524 described fewer, smaller (15 versus 30 mm) stents; however, the review found that insertion of an SVC stent relieved symptoms in the majority (see Table 163). A recent systematic review examined seven series of NSCLC and SCLC patients had responses to cerebral metastases520 (Level 4). A previous guideline states that corticosteroids and radiotherapy could be considered for headache due to cerebral metastases520 (Level 4).

12.9.4 Corticosteroids

Although corticosteroids are often used in high doses and short courses to treat SVCO along with radiotherapy, neither the Cochrane review520 nor our search identified studies that examined the effectiveness of corticosteroids in SVCO.

12.9.5 Summary of the management of SVCO

Although largely based on retrospective and non-randomised studies the Cochrane review520 concluded that chemotherapy and radiotherapy are effective in relieving SVCO and that stent insertion appears to provide relief in more patients more rapidly. The effectiveness of corticosteroids remains uncertain.

12.9.10 Management of Brain Metastases

12.10.1 Introduction

Brain metastases occur frequently in patients with lung cancer, especially SCLC, and have a profound effect on both quality of life and survival. Headaches (40%), motor deficits (36%), seizures (22%), disorientation (24%) and lethargy (16%) account for the vast majority of presenting symptoms45. Treatment is generally palliative, although occasionally it may be given with curative intent. Aggressive treatment of the metastasis is by resection; treatments with a palliative intent include corticosteroids and whole brain radiotherapy (WBRT). Our search identified one systematic review520 and two guidelines525,526 relevant to this topic. Many of the studies of brain metastases involve patients with a variety of types of cancer, but lung cancer accounts for the majority (see Table 163).

12.10.2 Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids reduce symptoms caused by cerebral metastases (including headache, focal or generalised seizures and motor or sensory deficits) by reducing cerebral oedema. A recent systematic review45 and a guideline45 found corticosteroids palliate symptoms in the short term for most patients45 although complications arise in approximately 30%45 (longer term side effects were not reported). The median survival of patients with brain metastases is one to two months when treated with corticosteroids alone45 (Level 3) (see Table 163).

12.10.3 Radiotherapy

Palliative whole brain radiotherapy (WBRT) may be offered to improve symptoms. Improvement in neurological symptoms can be seen in half of patients after 2 weeks and three-quarters after 4 weeks46. A recent systematic review examined seven randomised trials (4,104 evaluable patients)505. A retrospective study examined seven retrospective studies (4,104 evaluable patients)505. A recent systematic review commented that small scale series of NSCLC and SCLC patients had responses similar to those with tumours located elsewhere (Level 3). A previous guideline states that chemotherapy is effective at reducing pain caused by cerebral metastases in SCLC patients45 (Level 4).

12.10.5 Chemotherapy

Although it has been assumed that chemotherapy drugs pass the blood-brain barrier poorly, a recent systematic review46 commented that small scale series of NSCLC and SCLC patients had responses similar to those with tumours located elsewhere (Level 3). A previous guideline states that chemotherapy is effective at reducing pain caused by cerebral metastases in SCLC patients45 (Level 4).

12.10.6 Summary of management of brain metastases

The results from a systematic review46 and guidelines45,46 indicate that corticosteroids and whole brain radiotherapy are effective in palliation of lung cancer patients with a single brain metastasis. There is some evidence that chemotherapy also reduces pain caused by cerebral metastasis45,46 (Level 4).

12.11.1 Introduction

Compression of the spinal cord, typically by metastatic epidural tumours, can lead to neurological impairment and paraplegia. At the time of diagnosis the most common symptom is pain, followed by weakness, autonomic dysfunction or sensory loss525. Many types of cancer metastasise to the spinal column, but in relation to lung cancer the commonest cause is SCLC, with the majority of epidural metastases found in the thoracic region526.

12.11.2 Corticosteroids, radiotherapy and surgery

Our search identified a systematic review46 reporting one (underpowered) randomised controlled trial526 and two case series524 and another case series523 (see Table 164). The retrospective studies describe the combined outcomes of corticosteroids, radiotherapy and surgery. These include improved symptoms46 and regaining 22%505 (or retaining ambulatory status (Level 3). These studies concluded that any treatment of spinal cord compression should be initiated rapidly; treatment within 12 hours is associated with functional recovery46; conversely the studies observe a lack of recovery of functions of patients presenting with the severest symptoms (e.g. paraplegia)46 (Level 3).

Although not based on analysis of prognostic factors the systematic review46 suggests surgery should be considered in certain contexts: patients who have received previous irradiation to the area, patients who experience progressive neurological deterioration while receiving radiation; and for patients with symptomatic spinal instability or bone fragments causing compression46 (Level 4).

12.11.3 Summary of management of spinal cord compression

Radiotherapy remains the mainstay of managing patients with spinal cord compression, with some evidence of its effectiveness in palliating pain and improving or at least preserving neurological function. Although there are no comparative studies surgery continues to be a largely supportive treatment in managing patients with specific symptoms (Level 3).
Patients with spinal cord compression should have treatment within 24 hours. Corticosteroids, radiotherapy and surgery where appropriate, should be administered. Patients with spinal cord compression should also have early referral to the physiotherapist and occupational therapist for assessment, treatment and rehabilitation. Referral to the occupational therapist should be made for wheelchair assessment, assessment of activities of daily living and home assessment (GPP).

12.12 Hypercalcemia, Bone Pain and Pathological Fractures

As one of the most frequent sites of metastasis in lung cancer patients, bone metastases present either as painful lesions or as pathological fractures. An HTA report has been published on treatments for hypercalcemia.

Methods of treating bone metastases include radiotherapy, bisphosphonates and nevrel blocks. After sifting and appraisal, there were no studies retrieved from our search to evaluate the effectiveness of these treatments that were confined to lung cancer patients only. A small number of RCTs on patients with a combination of primary sites however, did provide sufficient breakdown for lung cancer patients, although the results are extremely limited, both in terms of the numbers of patients and the outcomes reported, as they are sub-analysis of papers. To supplement this type of data, where appropriate, we extrapolated using the results of systematic reviews of RCTs of mixed primaries. Such reviews were primarily made up of patients with breast and prostate cancer and it is envisaged that bone metastases resulting from different primaries will respond in a similar way to interventions.

12.12.1 Radiotherapy

12.12.1.1 Effectiveness

Results on the effectiveness of radiotherapy on pain from bone metastases were obtained from a Cochrane review and an RCT, both of which reported results of cancer patients with a combination of primary sites (Table 166). Within the Cochrane review, radiotherapy was compared to an assumed rate of one in 100 patients having naturally resolving pain and the authors found that radiotherapy produced complete pain relief at one month in 25% of patients and at least 50% pain relief in 41% of patients at some time during the trial (Level 1+). In addition to these results, Salazar et al. reported that a total of 89% of patients responded to therapy, 45% achieving complete pain relief (Level 1+). In terms of adverse events, the Cochrane review reported no obvious difference between the fractionation schedules in the incidence of nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea or pathological fractures although they acknowledged that the reporting of adverse effects was poor in the studies included (Level 1+).

12.12.1.2 Time to and Duration of Relief

The Cochrane review also reported results on the time to pain relief. SIGN’s literature review retrieved one additional RCT, which reported results on the time taken to maximum pain relief from three different radiotherapy treatment plans; A) 3Gy’s for 5 days, B) 2 fractions (6-8hrs apart) of 4Gy each in a single day, and C) 3Gy twice daily (6-8hrs apart) on two consecutive days (Table 167). The RCT reported that while the average time to any pain relief was three days, there was no statistical difference between any of the arms in terms of average time to maximum pain relief (range 6-9 days) or percentage of patients achieving net pain relief (Level 1+). The Cochrane review reported that half of patients who achieved complete relief took more than 4 weeks and that median duration of relief was 12 weeks (Level 1+).

12.12.1.3 Single versus Multiple Fractions

The Cochrane review and two RCTs reported results on single vs. multiple radiotherapy fractions (Table 168). Steenland et al. examined the effectiveness of a single fraction of radiotherapy against a total dose of 24Gy given in six fractions of radiotherapy on almost 300 patients with lung cancer. The single dose arm produced favourable results, both in terms of complete response (28% vs. 19%) and percentage of patients with progression (55% vs. 46%) although the statistical significance of these results was not reported. In terms of the percentage of retreatments needed however, the arm of the trial undergoing multiple fractions of radiotherapy had many less (5% vs. 32%) although, again the significance of this result is not clear (Level 1+). The Cochrane review and Sarkar et al. also reported that no difference was seen in terms of single fraction vs. multiple fractionation schedules (Level 1+), and so single fractions are appropriate in most circumstances.

12.12.2 Bisphosphonates

No RCTs were retrieved for lung cancer patients which included a breakdown of results for lung cancer patients only. We identified two systematic reviews on the effectiveness of bisphosphonates for the relief of pain and skeletal morbidity from bone metastases from a combination of primary sites. However, the GDG felt that such evidence could not be extrapolated to lung cancer patients. The findings of Ross et al. suggested that benefit was apparent only after 6 months of treatment, this raises the question of their usefulness in patients with a shorter prognosis. The second review, Wong and Wilfer, reported that although there was some evidence for the effectiveness of bisphosphonates (Table 169), there was not enough to recommend them for first line treatment and their relative effectiveness for different neoplasms was inconclusive. Further research is required.

12.12.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, guidance exists (e.g. SIGN pain guidelines) for standard treatments such as analgesics for the relief of symptoms from bone metastasis from all types of cancer which is not reviewed here. These standard treatments should be administered as first line treatment before more invasive treatment. If such interventions are insufficient, single fraction radiotherapy should be administered.

12.13 Other symptoms: weight loss, loss of appetite, difficulty swallowing, fatigue and depression

Other symptoms experienced by large numbers of patients that require palliative treatment and care include fatigue, weight loss, loss of appetite, difficulty with swallowing and depression. The Guideline Development Group’s collaborators, SIGN, found no research evidence assessing the effectiveness of different treatments for these symptoms specific to lung cancer patients.

The Group recommends that for all symptoms there should be a multidisciplinary approach. This multidisciplinary group will include occupational therapists, physiotherapists and dieticians whose particular roles are outlined below. If the patient has unmet physical, psychological, social or spiritual needs despite this general palliative care approach, referral should be made to a specialist palliative care service, which will include access to counselling provision.

12.13.1 Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Dieticians

The importance of a multidisciplinary approach in general and for rehabilitation in particular for patients with cancer has been highlighted in the NICE Supportive and Palliative Care Guidance.

Occupational therapists treat people with physical and mental health problems through the use of specific activities, to enable patients to reach their optimum level of function and independence in all aspects of their daily lives. Occupational therapists can assist with managing fatigue, breathlessness, pain, pressure care, weight loss, cognitive problems, bone metastases, anxiety, panic, management and depression. Interventions such as energy conservation – emphasising the importance of planning, prioritising and pacing daily occupations – can have a beneficial effect on patients’ self-esteem and well-being.

Physiotherapists treat physical conditions through specific treatment modalities such as electrotherapy, manipulation, tissue mobilisation, exercise, rehabilitation etc. Patients with lung cancer should be referred to a physiotherapist for advice on breathing techniques, positioning, life style changes, and relaxation and coping strategies. Exercise including progressive walking and stepping regimens to improve muscle strength as well as their exercise tolerance. Such exercise should be carefully prescribed within their disease limitations. One to one treatment also provides psychological support for the patient and the carer.
In addition to the above, the Guideline Group recognises the particular contribution that occupational therapists and physiotherapists make to patients with lung cancer and brain metastases or spinal cord compression, for example all aspects of rehabilitation including pressure care advice and management.

Dieticians provide specialist nutritional advice. Patients with lung cancer should have access to a registered dietician. Dieticians can advise on specific problems such as anaemia, weight loss, swallowing difficulties and fatigue.

12.14 Economics of Palliative Interventions

Two studies were selected for tabulation (Table 170 and Table 171). Four economic evaluations of chemotherapy versus best supportive care (BSC) are reported in Chapter 8. Chemotherapy for NSCLC was studied.

Given that there is no evidence specifically for lung cancer patients in the treatment of malignant pleural effusion, evidence was sought regardless of cancer site and four economic analyses were selected for tabulation (Table 170 and Table 171).

12.14.1 Palliative Radiotherapy versus Best Supportive Care (BSC)

The objective of Coy et al. was to compare high dose palliative radiotherapy with BSC in terms of cost per LY gained and cost per QALY gained. Given that the study is comparing essentially palliative radiotherapy with BSC in terms of outcomes of palliation of patients with symptomatic tumour obstruction due to inoperable NSCLC. The rate of symptom improvement (dyspnoea relief), occurrence of complications, mean survival, and the length of hospital stay were observed as health outcomes. The perspective of the economic analysis was the health insurance company in the Netherlands.

It was observed that symptom improvements were achieved in about 70% of patients in both study groups and no treatment complication was recorded. The mean survival was 8.0 months in the Nd-YAG laser group and 11.5 ± 3.5 months in the electrocautery group. The mean survival months were reported as 1 Y in Table 171.

The average costs of treatment per patient were £3,126 in the Nd-YAG laser group and £2,678 in electrocautery group. The cost difference was mainly due to longer hospital stay in the laser group (8.4 days) than in the electrocautery group (6.7 days), the number of treatment sessions was the same in each group.

The comparison of costs of treatment per patient and LYs gained for both groups showed that electrocautery was a dominant strategy. Life expectancy was slightly improved with electrocautery at lower cost.

The sensitivity analysis identified the best scenarios (upper bound of the approximate 95% confidence interval for LY/QALY gained, 80% of average cost) and the worst scenarios (the lower bound of the approximate 95% confidence interval for LY/QALY gained, 120% of average cost) for high dose palliative radiotherapy + BSC in comparison with BSC. The cost-effectiveness of high dose palliative radiotherapy + BSC over BSC ranged from £3,261 to £16,806 per QALY gained from the societal perspective and, from £4,322 to £22,274 from the clinic perspective. According to the results of the analysis, the incremental cost-effectiveness ratio for high dose palliative radiotherapy combined with BSC lies below the threshold of £30,000/QALY gained, which is commonly used to select medical interventions. Hence, palliative radiotherapy combined with BSC was found to be a cost-effective strategy in comparison with BSC for advanced NSCLC. However, as the patients who received only BSC had already refused high dose radiotherapy, the potential is bias for high.

12.14.2 Nd-YAG Laser versus Bronchoscopic Electrocautery

Van Boeckel et al. evaluated the costs and clinical outcomes of Nd-YAG laser versus electrocautery for palliation of patients with symptomatic tumour obstruction due to inoperable NSCLC. The rate of symptom improvement (dyspnoea relief), occurrence of complications, mean survival, and the length of hospital stay were observed as health outcomes. The perspective of the economic analysis was the health insurance company in the Netherlands.

It was observed that symptom improvements were achieved in about 70% of patients in both study groups and no treatment complication was recorded. The mean survival was 8.0 months in the Nd-YAG laser group and 11.5 ± 3.5 months in the electrocautery group. The mean survival months were reported as 1 Y in Table 171.

The average costs of treatment per patient were £3,126 in the Nd-YAG laser group and £2,678 in electrocautery group. The cost difference was mainly due to longer hospital stay in the laser group (8.4 days) than in the electrocautery group (6.7 days), the number of treatment sessions was the same in each group.

The comparison of costs of treatment per patient and LYs gained for both groups showed that electrocautery was a dominant strategy. Life expectancy was slightly improved with electrocautery at lower cost.

12.14.3 Talc versus Bleomycin in the treatment of malignant pleural effusion

Zimmer et al. assessed the cost-effectiveness of talc slurry compared with bleomycin. No significant difference was found between the groups in terms of improvement in pain and dyspnoea scores (Table 171). There was a significant cost advantage with using talc to control symptomatic malignant pleural effusions. The cost of medication was £12.36 for talc and £955.83 for bleomycin treatment. The results of this study should be treated with some caution as it was restricted with small sample size and lack of detailed analysis on costs.

Diacon et al. result was similar to that of Zimmer et al. Their analysis included all relevant direct costs and effectiveness results were based on a randomised controlled trial. Thoracoscopic talc poudrage was a dominant strategy over bleomycin instillation with lower recurrence rate of effusion (13% vs. 41%) and lower costs ($3,893 vs. $4,169 in Swiss francs).

The retrospective analysis of Read et al. found shorter length of stay associated with thoracoscopic talc pleurodesis (4.6 ± 3.3 days) compared to the tube thoracostomy (13.9 ± 5.9 days).

Belani et al. found talc to be the most effective pleurodesis agent, however unlike the other studies it found talc to be more costly than bleomycin, mainly due to the need for operating theatre and anaesthesiology. The additional 15 symptomatic days associated with talc were at a cost of $308 per day.

All of the studies compared talc administered surgically with bleomycin administered by bedside thoracotomy. Hence it is not possible to separate the effects of the sclerosing agent from those pertaining to the type of procedure.

12.14.4 Chronic indwelling pleural catheter versus chest tube and sclerosis in the treatment of malignant pleural effusion

The management of malignant pleural effusions by indwelling pleural catheter was compared with chest tube and sclerosis. When patients were treated with outpatient pleural catheter, the mean charge was lower ($3,391±1,753) than the inpatient charges for patients treated with chest tube and sclerosis ($7,830±4,497) (p<0.001). The difference occurred due to seven days higher mean length of stay with the treatment of chest tube and sclerosis. There was no difference in survival between both treatment groups (see Table 171). However, if pleural catheter was placed in an inpatient basis, the charges would be higher ($11,188±7,964) than that for chest tube and sclerosis.

12.14.5 Conclusions and Discussions

The economic evidence found from the literature review for the management of malignant pleural effusions was not specific to lung cancer patients. No economic evidence based on the UK health system was found. Three economic analyses (two cost-effectiveness and one resource use) concluded that talc was a dominant strategy over bleomycin for the management of malignant pleural effusions and a fourth study indicated that talc was more costly but may be cost-effective. Outpatient pleural catheter could be cost-saving. However, this retrospective study measured hospital charges, which do not reflect the true costs.

The other reviewed studies were conducted in different health settings (Canada and the Netherlands) and these technologies may not be applicable to the UK NHS practice. They were restricted in their sample size. The studies were not randomised and patients were self-selecting, which may be a cause of bias. Further trials and economic evaluations are needed to compare different forms of palliative treatments of lung cancer patients that are more commonly available in UK healthcare context.
12.15 **Recommendations**

12.15.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations

Supportive and palliative care of the patient should be provided by general and specialist palliative care providers in accordance with the NICE guidance ‘improving supportive and palliative care for adults with cancer’. [D(GP)]

Patients who may benefit from specialist palliative care services should be identified and referred without delay. [D(GP)]

External beam radiotherapy should be considered for the relief of breathlessness, cough, haemoptysis or chest pain. [A]

Opioids, such as codeine or morphine, should be considered to reduce cough. [A]

Debulking bronchoscopic procedures should be considered for the relief of distressing large-airway obstruction or bleeding due to an endobronchial tumour within a large airway. [D]

Patients with endobronchial symptoms that are not palliated by other means may be considered for endobronchial therapy. [D]

Patients with extrinsic compression may be considered for treatment with stents. [D]

Non-drug interventions based on psychosocial support, breathing control and coping strategies should be considered for patients with breathlessness. [A]

Non-drug interventions for breathlessness should be delivered by a multidisciplinary group, co-ordinated by a professional with an interest in breathlessness and expertise in the techniques (for example, a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist).

Although this support may be provided in a breathlessness clinic, patients should have access to it in all care settings. [D(GP)]

Patients with troublesome hoarseness due to recurrent laryngeal nerve palsy should be referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist for advice. [D(GP)]

Patients who present with superior vena cava obstruction should be offered chemotherapy and radiotherapy according to the stage of disease and performance status. [A]

Stent insertion should be considered for the immediate relief of severe symptoms of superior vena cava obstruction or following failure of earlier treatment. [B]

Corticosteroids and radiotherapy should be considered for symptomatic treatment of cerebral metastases in lung cancer. [D]

Other symptoms, including weight loss, loss of appetite, depression and difficulty swallowing, should be managed by multidisciplinary groups that include supportive and palliative care professionals. [D(GP)]

Pleural aspiration or drainage should be performed in an attempt to relieve the symptoms of a pleural effusion. [B]

Patients who benefit symptomatically from aspiration or drainage of fluid should be offered talc pleurodesis for longer-term benefit. [B]

For patients with bone metastasis requiring palliation and for whom standard analgesic treatments are inadequate, single-fraction radiotherapy should be administered. [B]

Spinal cord compression is a medical emergency and immediate treatment (within 24 hours), with corticosteroids, radiotherapy and surgery where appropriate, is recommended. [D]

Patients with spinal cord compression should have an early referral to an oncology physiotherapist and an occupational therapist for assessment, treatment and rehabilitation. [D(GP)]

12.15.2 Research Recommendations

The management of common symptoms such as cachexia, anorexia, fatigue and breathlessness experienced by patients with lung cancer needs further research. Specifically, research is required into clinically meaningful outcome measures for the treatment of the cachexia-anorexia syndrome. For example, does the level of physical activity as measured by an activity meter relate to performance status, quality of life and use of health and social care services?

Further research is required to determine the benefit of non-drug treatments for breathlessness, compared to no treatment or other drug based treatments, in terms of symptom relief and performance status for patients with lung cancer.

The effect of bisphosphonates in the relief of pain and skeletal morbidity from bone metastasis in lung cancer needs further research.
13 Service Organisation

13.1 Introduction

The most important change in the care of lung cancer patients in the last decade has been the development of integrated multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) to facilitate their diagnosis and management (Calman-Hine Report547). Patients require a combination of a rapid diagnosis, empathetic handling and the confidence that their treatment is of a high quality. These objectives can be realised by optimising local service arrangements.

Before the Calman-Hine reforms, a regional randomised stratified analysis of the management pathways of 400 patients with an eventual diagnosis of lung cancer, found 80 such pathways548. More than 50% of patients did not present to hospital with a chest X-ray suspicious of lung cancer. There were substantial delays between diagnosis and treatment and many patients never saw a lung cancer specialist. This study illustrated that by utilising organised pathways, a better standard of care may be provided. The new pathways should ensure that all patients see a lung cancer specialist (usually a chest physician), that delays - especially to bronchoscopy, fine needle aspiration (FNA) or computed tomography (CT) - are minimised and to ensure that all patients have a management plan as a result of input from a chest physician, a specialist nurse (including those from palliative care), a radiologist, medical and clinical oncologists and (usually) a surgeon. Such service changes have not been subject to randomised controlled trials and comparative studies pre and post reform are difficult. Although some evaluation may emerge, there is at present a professional consensus that patient care both organised around an MDT and consistent with the Manual of Cancer Service Standards498, is superior to conventional non-specialised and fragmented care.

13.2 Issues examined in this review

These guidelines are concerned with evidence based, best practice recommendations for the diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. The logistics of how to organise the service to best provide these interventions is outside of this document’s remit. Details on service issues can be found in the Manual of Cancer Service Standards498 and the NHS Cancer Plan549. There is however, some evidence reviewed in this chapter relating to specific organisational issues affecting the outcomes of patients with lung cancer. These are: the effects of using a multi-disciplinary team structure, one or two-stop clinics for the diagnosis of the disease, the involvement of specialist nursing staff in the care pathway and the effect of delays on treatment outcomes. We have also assessed the effectiveness of different follow up strategies.

13.3 Methodology

In this chapter, the NCC-AC and SIGN both carried out sections of the literature search and appraisal. The NCC-AC performed searches on rapid access clinics, specialist nurse support, multidisciplinary teams, timing of treatment and the patient perspective. SIGN carried out the search for follow up. The search strategies can be found in appendix six.

The methodology used to appraise the papers was described earlier in section 2.1.2.

13.4 Multi-disciplinary Teams (MDTs)

As input from many different professionals is required in the management of patients with lung cancer, MDTs are especially appropriate and can reduce delays caused by cross-referral between specialists. These teams may include, general physicians and nurses, chest physicians, palliative care physicians, clinical and medical oncologists, thoracic surgeons, genitourinary, cellular pathologists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, specialist nurses, physiotherapists, dieticians, pharmacists and clinical psychologists.

The importance of MDTs has been noted by a number of previous reports: the Calman-Hine report547, Improving Outcomes in Lung Cancer (NHS Executive)548, NHS Cancer Plan549, Clinical Oncology Information Network guidelines550, British Thoracic Society recommendations on organising care for lung cancer patients551 and the American College of Chest Physicians552 (Level 4). Expert opinion and formal consensus in the above reports suggests that:

- All patients with a likely diagnosis of lung cancer should be referred to a member of a lung cancer multi-disciplinary team (usually a chest physician).
- The care of all patients with a working diagnosis of lung cancer should be discussed at a lung cancer multi-disciplinary team meeting.

It is important that there is adequate administrative support for MDTs. We found no studies on the clinical or cost effectiveness of MDTs in lung cancer with regard to improvement of survival or quality of life.

13.5 Early Diagnosis Clinics

Patients with a putative diagnosis of lung cancer are often subject to multiple appointments and potentially considerable delays in the diagnostic pathway. An initial consultation in an outpatient clinic may result in separate appointments for a day-case bronchoscopy, a staging CT scan, a CT guided FNA, full pulmonary function tests, and then a separate clinic meeting to discuss the results. To overcome these problems, units have developed integrated diagnostic days. Patients are seen for the initial consultation and then may receive subsequent investigations (CT /bronchoscopy / FNA/ lung function tests) on either the same day (one stop clinic) or on a second day (two stop clinic).

We found no evidence on the effect of using a one-stop clinic approach in the treatment of lung cancer. The literature search retrieved one randomised pilot study on the use of two stop clinics. This study randomised 88 patients with suspicion of lung cancer to attend a two-stop clinic or to receive conventional care. The study found that the time from presentation to treatment was four weeks shorter (p=0.0025) in the two-stop clinic arm of the trial552. Although no significant difference was noted in survival it seems intuitive that faster treatment would lead to more patients being suitable for radical treatment and therefore improvement in survival. No significant difference was found in the overall quality of life between the two groups, but a survey of satisfaction found that patients in the two-stop clinic arm were more satisfied with the organisation of investigations (p=0.07) and their personal experience of care (p=0.09)552 (Level 1). Please see Table 171 for details.

A survey of 61 lung cancer patients and carers carried out by the Royal Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care (see section 13.9.1 for details) found that one of the main opinions of the group was a desire for speedy access to services (Level 3).

We found no economic evidence in this area. In conclusion, integrated One-stop or Two-stop clinics for the investigation of putative lung cancer patients are associated with a reduction in diagnostic delay and patient anxiety. They should be utilised where possible.

13.6 Specialist Nurse Support

We did not find any evidence on whether the involvement of specialist nurse support during diagnosis or treatment of patients with lung cancer had an effect on quality of life or survival. The British Thoracic Society (BTS) recommend that all cancer units should have a trained nurse who would see patients at or after diagnosis and then provide continuing support or establish a link with the general practitioner or community team551. A survey of 61 lung cancer patients and carers carried out by the Royal Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care supports this recommendation. Respondents placed importance on having access to a lung cancer
support nurse throughout the treatment journey (see section 13.9.1 for details) (Level 3). No economic evidence was found in this area.

There is some evidence on the involvement of nursing support during follow up (see section 13.8).

The guideline development group supports the findings of the BTS report563,564 and recommends that:

> All cancer units/centres should have one or more trained lung cancer nurse specialists to see patients before and after diagnosis, to provide continuing support, and to facilitate communication between the MDT, secondary care and the general practitioner and the community team. Their role includes the availability for patients to access advice and support whenever they need it.

13.7 Timing of treatment

In 1993, the Joint Council for Clinical Oncology (JCCO) issued targets for the time from first consultation to the start of radiotherapy or chemotherapy565. Guidance on timing has also been issued by the Department of Health in the National Manual of Quality Measures for Cancer566 and the Welsh Assembly Government in the All Wales minimum standards for lung cancer567. Patients should be treated within 31 days of the decision to treat and within 62 days of their urgent referral. In this section, we investigated the effect that delays in diagnosis or treatment might have on survival and quality of life.

The time for a tumour to double in size has been estimated from chest radiographs of solitary pulmonary nodules to be about 100 days for NSCLC and about 30 days for SCLC21. It seems intuitive that as the tumour grows, the chances of curative treatment or prolongation of survival would decrease. Although there is little definitive evidence in this area, some observational studies have reported that this is the case (Table 173).

13.7.1 Studies considered for the review

We found three studies that looked at delay before radiotherapy and three studies that looked at the delay before surgery. No studies had a breakdown of results showing the effect of the delay before chemotherapy. One study looked at the delay before treatment of any kind (radiotherapy, surgery or chemotherapy). Studies tended to use different start and end points of the time measured and few measured survival or quality of life.

13.7.2 Time before any treatment

One study that examined the influence of treatment delay on survival did not find a significant relationship using multivariate analysis568. This study looked at time from referral to treatment by radiotherapy, surgery or chemotherapy but did not examine delay in referral or patient delay, which may have an effect on survival (Level 3).

13.7.3 Time before radiotherapy

The study by O’Rourke and Edwards (2000)557 found that whilst on the waiting list 21% of candidates for radical radiotherapy had significant disease progression which meant that the tumour could no longer be encompassed by the radiation port for radical treatment. The delay ranged from 18-131 days (median 54 days). Tumour growth ranged from 0.373% in this time although this was not significantly correlated with delay (Level 3). Another observational study noted that 95% of patients who were referred for continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy were found not to be suitable for inclusion in an RCT which was being conducted569. The main reasons were poor general condition (37%), large tumour size (27%) or extrathoracic metastases (19%). The median delay between diagnosis and treatment was five weeks (range 3-9 weeks) (Level 3).

Patients not suitable for radical treatment, and not having symptoms demanding immediate treatment, were randomised in an RCT to receive immediate palliative radiotherapy or palliative radiotherapy delivered symptomatically570. No significant differences were found in symptom control, quality of life or survival (Level 1+).

A systematic review that reported observational results mostly from breast cancer and head and neck cancer studies found that delays in treatment were associated with higher five year local recurrence rates571. Although they found very few studies on lung cancer, the results may be applicable (Level 3).

13.7.4 Time before surgery

Only one study looked at the influence of the delay until surgery on survival on 1082 patients561. No significant relationship was found although 34 patients were excluded because their surgery was >154 days after diagnosis (Level 3).

Two studies examined whether patients found to be at later stages of the disease had experienced longer delays. One found that there was no significant relationship562 and the other found that stage III and IV patients had experienced significantly longer delays563 (Level 3).

13.7.5 Summary of impact of waiting times

The disagreement in the results for all treatment modalities may well be due to the heterogeneity in the definitions of ‘delay’ which studies have used. Delay can arise for many reasons including delay in referral, patient delay and hospital delay. These different delays have not been fully addressed by the past studies in this area for lung cancer. Due to the high incidence of distant metastases compared with other cancers, it may be difficult to identify the impact of waiting times on reduced local control and subsequent outcomes. This is an area where future research would be useful.

Although there is a lack of consistent clinical evidence, in terms of patient preferences and reduction of anxiety at a difficult time it is important to reduce the time taken as much as possible. Patient views are discussed in further detail in the next section.

No economic evidence was found in this area.

The guideline development group concluded that:

> Patients who cannot be offered curative treatment, can be either observed until symptoms arise and then treated with palliative radiotherapy or treated with palliative radiotherapy immediately.

Further research is necessary to determine:

> The impact of the time between first symptom (or first detection if asymptomatic) and treatment, on survival and quality of life of lung cancer patients.

13.8 Follow Up

This section refers to the surveillance of patients in remission after treatment. SIGN carried out a search for literature on strategies for following up patients (see chapter 2).

No systematic reviews were found but one randomised controlled trial563 on nurse led follow up, and one cohort study602 on smoking cessation were identified and are discussed below. The search identified no evidence on specific follow up strategies after different types of treatment (surgical, radiotherapy, chemotherapy or palliative), or whether certain routine tests should be performed. However the guideline development group decided to make some good practice points where no high quality evidence was retrieved.

13.8.1 General follow-up issues

Follow-up Plan

The guideline development group wished to make a good practice point that after finishing radical treatment, a personal follow-up plan should be discussed and agreed with patients, following discussion with all healthcare professionals involved in the patient’s care. GPs should also be informed of the plan.
Smoking Cessation
No randomised controlled trials were identified on the effect of smoking cessation on the outcomes of treatment. The literature search did identify one cohort study\(^{564}\) that examined the difference in outcomes of patients who were and were not smoking within one month of their surgery (see Table 174). Those patients who were still smoking within 1 month of the operation were 2.7 times more likely to have major pulmonary events (95% CI 1.18 to 6.17 p=0.018 Level 2+). An additional cohort study, Nakagawa et al\(^{564}\) reported on the impact that smoking status had on the incidence of postoperative pulmonary complications (PPCs) after pulmonary surgery. The authors reported that the cessation of smoking preoperatively has a positive impact on the incidence of PPCs. Patients who had ceased smoking for more than 5 weeks experienced a decrease in PPC’s although it is unclear if this was statistically significant (Level 2+). However, there is no data on the effect of smoking cessation on any other outcome measures such as survival or quality of life after surgery. Evidence on the effect on smoking during radiotherapy treatment for SCLC is anecdotal and commented in chapter 11.

One consensus report recommended that patients should stop smoking because there is a higher risk of a second primary cancer in patients who remain active smokers after treatment for a first primary lung cancer\(^{566}\) (Level 4).

The guideline development group decided to recommend that patients with lung cancer, and particularly those with a better prognosis should be encouraged to stop smoking and should be given information on the NHS stop smoking services. Any encouragement of cessation of smoking should be sensitively approached.

Nurse led follow-up
One randomised controlled trial was identified on nurse led follow up\(^{564}\). This trial recruited patients thought to have a life expectancy of greater than three months after primary treatment. One group of patients was randomised to nurse led follow up of outpatients, while the other group received conventional medical follow up (see Table 175).

Although there was no significant difference in survival or overall quality of life score, the nurse led follow up was associated with less severe dyspnoea at 3 months (p=0.03), better scores for emotional functioning at 12 months (p=0.03) and less peripheral neuropathy at 12 months (p=0.05) (Level 1+).

After completion of their treatment, patients with an expectation of life greater than three months should have access to protocol controlled nurse led follow up as an option.

13.8.2 Follow up after Surgery
No studies were retrieved that looked specifically at survival and quality of life outcomes for routine follow up after surgery. However, the guideline development group felt it was reasonable to follow up patients for six months after surgery to check for postoperative complications. A recent consensus statement\(^{567}\) on follow up suggested that follow up should take place at a frequency suitable to measure the adverse effects of the treatment and recommended that patients receive a chest x-ray at the follow up visit (Level 4).

The consensus statement\(^{567}\) went on to recommend that, after the initial visit, patients should be followed up every three months for the first two years, and then every six months up to five years (Level 4). There is no evidence that follow up beyond five years is beneficial.

There is debate about the merits of using a symptom led follow up strategy (where imaging is only performed for patients with new symptoms or signs) as opposed to having regular appointments with patients. Evidence in this area is conflicting.

Three cohort studies were identified\(^{568-570}\) in the NCC-AC economics search, that examined survival after regular or symptom related follow up (see Table 176 and Table 177). Two studies found no significant difference in survival\(^{568,570}\) and one found better survival in those patients followed up regularly\(^{569}\) (Level 2+). Quality of life was not measured by any of the studies and no overall conclusion can be made about the best strategy for follow up.

13.8.3 Follow up after Radical Radiotherapy
A recent consensus document\(^{569}\) found that the interval between end of treatment and follow up should be related to anticipated toxicity from the treatment (Level 4). The search identified no further evidence relating to follow up after radical radiotherapy. The guideline development group considered that it was good practice for these patients to be followed up routinely, with thoracic imaging, for nine months after the completion of treatment in order to treat any pneumonitis as appropriate, identify the need for further radiotherapy and the prognosis.

There is no evidence that follow up beyond five years is beneficial for this group of patients. Six monthly follow up with radiographs in well patients essentially offers a form of screening for new lesions – particularly likely if patients continue to smoke. However, there appears to be no evidence that a policy of regular review is better than symptom-led review.

13.8.4 Follow up after Palliative Radiotherapy or Chemotherapy
No evidence on the use of follow up after palliative radiotherapy or chemotherapy was found. The guideline development group considered that it was good practice to follow up patients routinely one month after the end of treatment. The examination should include chest x-ray, if clinically indicated. A recent consensus document\(^{567}\) also suggested that the interval between end of treatment and follow up should be related to anticipated toxicity from the treatment. They also went on to suggest that a chest x-ray should be carried out and that follow up visits should continue every 1-2 months for the first six months (Level 4).

The GDC also wanted to make the following research recommendation:

> For patients who have had attempted curative treatment and have completed their initial follow up, trials should examine the duration of follow up and whether regular routine follow up is better than symptom led follow up in terms of survival, symptom control and quality of life.

13.8.5 Economics of Follow-up after curative surgery

Five studies were selected for tabulation that analyzed follow-up of NSCLC patients who had undergone curative resection. There was no evidence on follow-up after other treatment modalities, e.g. chemotherapy, radiotherapy, combination or palliative treatment.

The literature review showed that there is diversity of follow-up after complete resection for lung cancer. See Table 176 and Table 177 for the definition of each follow-up protocol used and details of the studies.

Routine follow-up versus symptom-related follow-up
Three studies assessed the cost effectiveness of regular follow-up of patients who underwent resection for NSCLC using retrospective data\(^{568-570}\). Egermann et al\(^{568}\) analysed 10-year retrospective data for 563 NSCLC patients who had operated with curative intent. It was assumed that follow-up could provide a chance for a second curative treatment. Therefore the life-years (LYs) gained was calculated for those patients (n=23) who underwent further operation with curative intent during the follow-up period. The improvement in life expectancy of those patients was low and not significant (0.05 LYs gained). They added the costs of re-operations of the patients into the costs of follow-up procedures. The cost effectiveness of regular follow-up was £90,000 (£39,000) which was above the upper limit of acceptable cost-effectiveness (£30,000). Hence, the regular follow-up was not cost-effective.

Westeel et al\(^{569}\) produced contrary results, through the analysis of 14-year retrospective data for the similar group of patients in France. The median-disease free survival (19 months) for the whole study population was assessed and costs were calculated for this period. Regular follow-up improved life expectancy (0.11 LYs gained) and was found to be cost-effective ($16,154)\(^{570}\).

Younes et al\(^{570}\) carried out a cost-effectiveness analysis on strict versus symptom related follow-up. No significant improvement in survival was obtained with strict follow-up. Symptom related follow-up was less costly than strict follow-up. Hence, symptom related strategy was cost-saving.
Non-intensive versus intensive follow-up

Virgo et al. identified specific follow-up strategies from the literature. By using Medicare hospital charges, they estimated the cost for a single patient with lung cancer followed up for five years. They assumed that there was no improvement in life expectancy with intensive follow-up. They concluded that non-intensive follow-up was cost-saving.

Nurse-led telephone follow-up versus outpatient follow-up

The only study conducted in the UK was Moore et al’s analysis that aimed to assess the costs and effectiveness of nurse-led follow-up versus conventional follow-up of patients with lung cancer who had completed their initial treatment. According to the results of the randomised controlled trial, there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the overall quality of life, median survival time and cost per patient. However, patients’ satisfaction was higher with nurse-led follow-up. In addition, the intervention group had significantly fewer medical consultations with a doctor (p=0.004) at 3 months, fewer radiographs taken at 3 months (p=0.04) and 6 months (p=0.03). It was concluded that nurse-led follow-up led to cost-savings and higher patient satisfaction.

Discussion and Limitations of Economic studies

The literature indicates that routine follow-up of patients after curative surgery for NSCLC adds to overall health service costs. The studies found that follow-up was associated only with small improvements in life expectancy. They differed substantially in terms of the estimated cost-effectiveness of follow-up (£16,000–£30,000). These differences were caused by the approach taken for the assessment of the clinical effectiveness and costs of the follow-up in each study.

Egermann et al. and Westeel et al. both estimated from their respective cohorts that about 4% of patients benefited from follow-up by being diagnosed with an operable new lesion. The crucial difference between the studies was the assumption about the life-years gained that would be attributable to the diagnosis of new cancer during follow-up.

Egermann et al. estimated a gain of 9 months by comparing the life expectancy of those who had a second resection with those who didn’t. This could be an under-estimate because patients that did have a second re-section probably would have had a lower than average life expectancy in the absence of the second resection. However, their overall estimate of effectiveness might be an under-estimate because included were the patients who were identified due to symptoms rather than the follow-up procedures.

Westeel et al. estimated a gain of 3 years because all seven patients were alive 3 years after their recurrence – again this is a biased estimate of the true incremental gain in life expectancy. This does seem to be an over-estimate, as it is the same as the estimated life-expectancy of patients after their first resection and also it doesn’t subtract the life expectancy that they would have had if they had not had a second resection. In addition to apparently under-estimating the effectiveness of follow-up, they clearly under-estimate the costs substantially by not including the cost of the additional re-sections (a crucial omission).

It is not possible to conclude on the cost-effectiveness of follow-up of NSCLC patients after curative surgery because there are no precise estimates of the improvement in life expectancy associated with second re-section in asymptomatic patients. However, the evidence presented overall does not point to routine follow-up being cost-effective, as the only study to show it to be cost-effective clearly under-estimated the incremental cost-effectiveness ratio. Of course cost, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness are dependent on the nature of the follow-up protocol and few follow-up protocols have been evaluated.

One UK study based on a randomised controlled trial concluded that nurse-led follow-up by telephone was cost saving without affecting the quality of life or survival of patients when compared with conventional outpatient follow-up. This might be a more cost-effective option that outpatient follow-up.

There is diversity of follow-up after complete resection of lung cancer. The ideal surveillance has not been defined. Future research based on randomised controlled trials is needed to compare the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of different follow-up strategies. The studies examined follow-up of lung cancer patients only after resection. There was no evidence on follow-up after chemotherapy, radiotherapy, combination therapy or palliative care.

13.9 The Patient’s Perspective

The 1995 Department of Health publication, A Policy Framework for Commissioning Cancer Services, recommended that services be ‘patient centred’. This document paved the way for cancer patient involvement in service provision.

Recently strategies have been produced, setting a framework to achieve this. In England, the relevant document is Involving Patients and the Public in Healthcare (2001) and in Wales, Signposts - A Practical Guide to Public and Patient Involvement in Wales (2001). These strategies underline the benefits of service user involvement in improving outcomes of health care, increasing patient satisfaction and in strengthening public confidence in the NHS. They provide a framework for patients and the public to be involved both at a collective / strategic level and on an individual basis.

Involvement in service provision is, broadly speaking, achieved in two ways:

> Patient consultation through surveys and questionnaires or through patient focus groups.

> Active partnership with user representatives as members of committees or working groups.

Though lung cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis in the UK, there are currently very few patient representatives involved in service planning and delivery. There are, inherent within this disease, a number of barriers to such patient involvement. With a median survival of four months from diagnosis, around 80% of patients are dead at one year, with only around 5% surviving five years; the average lung cancer patient may not survive the length of the working group. Furthermore, as most people with lung cancer are not only elderly but also less fit than their contemporaries, often suffering from smoking-related illnesses, they may be too ill to attend meetings.

However, certain organisations (such as the Roy Castle Lung Foundation and Cancer Relief Macmillan’s CancerVOICES) are involved in patient advocacy issues for lung cancer patients and endeavour to harness the spectrum of patient views with an eye to shaping future cancer services and research.

13.9.1 Lung Cancer Patient Opinions

Within the NHS, the experiences and needs of patients and families living with a diagnosis of lung cancer have been collected in the following initiatives:

Cancer Service Patient Survey

In July 2002 a survey on cancer services eliciting the views of more than 65,000 patients (74% of those approached), was published. 4,000 (6%) of respondents were lung cancer patients. The survey showed that, in most cases, patients were receiving high levels of care - for example, 81% had complete confidence in their doctors, 79% felt they were treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Within the NHS, the experiences and needs of patients and families living with a diagnosis of lung cancer have been collected in the following initiatives:

Patients and the Public in Healthcare (2001) and in Wales, Signposts - A Practical Guide to Public and Patient Involvement in Wales (2001). These strategies underline the benefits of service user involvement in improving outcomes of health care, increasing patient satisfaction and in strengthening public confidence in the NHS. They provide a framework for patients and the public to be involved both at a collective / strategic level and on an individual basis.

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The patients surveyed came from 172 NHS Trusts in England and questions related to care received between July 1999 and June 2000. As the National Cancer Plan (2000) was published after the survey was carried out, the findings will act as a baseline, upon which improvements can be measured at the individual Trust level.

Of the 65,000 views, only 4000 (6%) were from lung cancer patients.

Cancer Services Collaborative Patient Experience Projects

In England, as part of the Cancer Services Collaborative, a number of projects have measured how patients rate their care and have monitored the impact of system changes. A key area has been to
improve communication between patients and their
clinical team. This has been achieved in a variety of
ways, including written patient information booklets,
patient held records and taped consultations. The
Service Improvement Manuals (produced by the NHS
Modernisation Agency), including the Lung Cancer
Manual, give details of individual projects and how
changes have resulted in improvement.
Patients with lung cancer have reported experiencing
greater levels of unmet psychological, social and
economic needs than other cancer groups (Level 575)
(Level 3). They have also been less satisfied, than other
people with cancer, with the care received (Level 576)
(Level 3). A national needs assessment of lung cancer
patients and carers, undertaken on behalf of
Macmillan Cancer Relief, identified a myriad of
deficiencies in the organisation of care delivery and
in areas of information and support (Level 148).

As part of this Guideline process, The Roy Castle
Lung Cancer Foundation (RCLCF), in association with
the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care,
collected experiences and opinions from 61 lung
cancer patients and carers. Full details of this are
available on the RCLCF website (www.roycastle.org)

General themes expressed by this group, on the
organisation of services, included:

> Accessing services – respondents expressed a
desire to have speedy access to specialist
services, with the overwhelming majority
favouring the rapid access diagnostic clinic
approach. Many also reported a willingness to
come considerable distances to access the most
specialist services.

> Respondents also placed emphasis on seeing the
same doctor at every hospital visit.

> The importance of accessing a lung cancer
support nurse, throughout the treatment journey

> Continuing care – few in this group had
accessed community based support services,
those who did rated them highly.

More work is needed to establish the specific
opinions of lung cancer patients and carers, on the
organisation of lung cancer services.

13.9.2 Monitoring the Effects of Patient Involvement
As with the Cancer Services Collaborative Patient
Experience Projects, there are many individual
eexamples of patient views being surveyed and the
results contributing to service changes in a number of
settings (Level 131) (Level 3). There is, however, no
evidence of such involvement directly improving the
quality of care or the outcome for patients. The
challenge, therefore, as lay involvement continues to
be embedded within health services, is to ensure
that it is appropriate, representative and having its
impact monitored.

The review of NHS Cancer Care in England and
Wales, published in December 2001 and undertaken
by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI)
and the Audit Commission (AC) (Level 103), concluded that
cancer services still have a long way to go before
they are truly “patient focused”. This review, however,
only addressed the progress in implementing
recommendations of the 1995 Calman-Hine report,
A Policy Framework for Commissioning Cancer
Services (Level 105). It did not take into account the multiple
policy changes and initiatives, which have taken
place in the intervening years.

At a local level, systems need to be in place to ensure
that the opinions and experiences of lung cancer
patients and carers are collected. Further work is
needed to ensure that such patient involvement is
meaningful and that lung cancer services improve as a
result. The guideline development group made a
good practice point that the opinions and
experiences of lung cancer patients and carers should be
collected and used to improve the delivery of lung
cancer services. Patients should receive feedback on
any action taken as a result of such surveys.

13.10 Recommendations

13.10.1 Clinical Practice Recommendations
All patients with a likely diagnosis of lung cancer
should be referred to a member of a lung cancer
MDT (usually a chest physician). (D)

The care of all patients with a working diagnosis
of lung cancer should be discussed at a lung cancer
MDT meeting. (D)

Early diagnosis clinics should be provided where
possible for the investigation of patients with
suspected lung cancer, because they are associated
with faster diagnosis and less patient anxiety. (A)

All cancer units/centres should have one or more
trained lung cancer nurse specialists to see patients
before and after diagnosis, to provide continuing
support, and to facilitate communication between
the secondary care team (including the MDT), the
patient’s GP, the community team and the patient.
Their role includes helping patients to access advice
and support whenever they need it. (D)

Patients who have lung cancer suitable for radical
treatment or chemotherapy, or need radiotherapy or
ablative treatment for relief of symptoms, should be
treated without undue delay, according to the Welsh
Assembly Government and Department of Health
recommendations (within 31 days of the decision to
treat and within 62 days of their urgent referral). (D)

Patients who cannot be offered curative treatment,
and are candidates for palliative radiotherapy, may
either be observed until symptoms arise and then
treated, or be treated with palliative radiotherapy
immediately. (A)

When patients finish their treatment a personal
follow-up plan should be discussed and agreed with
them after discussion with the professionals involved
in the patient’s care. GPs should be informed of the
plan. (D/GP)

After completion of their treatment, patients with an
expectation of life of more than 3 months should have
access to protocol-controlled, nurse-led follow-up. (A)

Patients who have had attempted curative surgery
for NSCLC, or radical radiotherapy should be
followed up routinely by a member of the MDT for
up to 9 months to check for post-treatment
complications. Thoracic imaging should be part of
the review. (D)

For patients who have had attempted curative
surgery for NSCLC, any routine follow-up should not
extend beyond 3 years. (D)

Patients who have had palliative radiotherapy or
chemotherapy should be followed up routinely at 1
month after completion of treatment. A chest X-ray
should be part of the review if clinically indicated. (D)

Patients with lung cancer – in particular those with
a better prognosis – should be encouraged to stop
smoking. (D)

The opinions and experiences of lung cancer patients
and carers should be collected and used to improve
the delivery of lung cancer services. Patients should
receive feedback on any action taken as a result of
such surveys. (D/GP/P)

13.10.2 Research Recommendations
For patients who have had attempted curative
treatment and have completed their initial follow up,
tests should examine the duration of follow-up and
whether regular routine follow-up is better than
symptom-led follow-up in terms of survival, symptom
control and quality of life.

The impact of the time between first symptom (or
first detection if asymptomatic) and the treatment of
lung cancer on patients’ survival and quality of life
should be investigated.
# 14 Priority Areas for Audit

A national cancer dataset has been developed by the NHS Information Authority in collaboration with clinicians and the Department of Health. A data subset for lung cancer has been derived by the Intercollegiate Lung Cancer Group to support the National Lung Cancer Data Project (LUCADA), a national ongoing audit programme for lung cancer. The guideline development group notes that many of the recommendations within the complete guideline are auditable through this dataset. All English Cancer Networks are being encouraged to take part in this programme which began its national roll-out in July 2004. A copy of this dataset and further details of the LUCADA project can be found at: [http://www.nhsia.nhs.uk/rcpl/pages/audit_topics/cancer.asp?om=m1#lung](http://www.nhsia.nhs.uk/rcpl/pages/audit_topics/cancer.asp?om=m1#lung) or: [http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/college/ceeu/ceeu_lung_home.htm](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/college/ceeu/ceeu_lung_home.htm)

The audit criteria highlighted below are based on the recommendations selected as key priorities for implementation. Only two of these highlighted criteria fall within the LUCADA dataset. We have specified audit criteria, exceptions and definitions of terms for those recommendations that are not included LUCADA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Definition of terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All patients diagnosed with lung cancer should be offered information, both verbal and written, on all aspects of their diagnosis, treatment and care. This information should be tailored to the individual requirements of the patient and audio and videotaped formats should also be considered.</td>
<td>Percentage of patients diagnosed with lung cancer that are offered information, both verbal and written, on all aspects of their diagnosis, treatment and care. This information should be tailored to the individual requirements of the patient and audio and videotaped formats should also be considered.</td>
<td>Rapid – rapid enough to ensure time to diagnosis and treatment standards are achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent referral for a chest X-ray should be offered when a patient presents with: &gt; haemoptysis, or &gt; any of the following unexplained or persistent (that is, lasting more than 3 weeks) symptoms or signs: – cough – chest/shoulder pain – dyspnoea – weight loss – chest signs – hoarseness – finger clubbing – features suggestive of metastasis from a lung cancer (for example in brain, bone, liver or skin) – cervical/supraclavicular lymphadenopathy</td>
<td>Percentage of patients that present to a GP with the following symptoms and signs who are offered an urgent referral for a chest X-ray: &gt; haemoptysis, or &gt; any of the following unexplained or persistent (that is, lasting more than 3 weeks) symptoms or signs: – cough – chest/shoulder pain – dyspnoea – weight loss – chest signs – hoarseness – finger clubbing – features suggestive of metastasis from a lung cancer (for example in brain, bone, liver or skin) – cervical/supraclavicular lymphadenopathy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If a chest x-ray or chest CT suggests lung cancer (including pleural effusion and slowly resolving consolidation), patients should be offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer multidisciplinary team (MDT) usually a chest physician.</td>
<td>Percentage of patients with a chest x-ray or chest CT suggestive of lung cancer (including pleural effusion and slowly resolving consolidation) that are offered an urgent referral to a member of the lung cancer multidisciplinary team, usually a chest physician.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every cancer network should have a system of rapid access to FDG-PET scanning for eligible patients.</td>
<td>Percentage of eligible patients within the cancer network that have a FDG-PET scan.</td>
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## Definition of terms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients with stage I or II NSCLC who are medically inoperable, but suitable for radical radiotherapy should be offered the continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy (CHART) regimen.</td>
<td>Percentage of medically inoperable patients with stage I or II NSCLC who are suitable for radical radiotherapy who are treated using the continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy (CHART) regimen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemotherapy should be offered to patients with stages III and IV NSCLC and good performance status (WHO 0, 1 or a Karnofsky score of 80–100) to improve survival, disease control and quality of life.</td>
<td>This is covered by the LUCADA dataset.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-drug interventions for breathlessness should be delivered by a multidisciplinary group, co-ordinated by a professional with an interest in breathlessness and expertise in the techniques (for example, a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist). Although this support may be provided within a breathlessness clinic, patients should have access to it in all care settings.</td>
<td>Percentage of patients with lung cancer that experience breathlessness who have access to support from a multidisciplinary group with an interest in breathlessness and expertise in non-drug interventions (for example, a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The care of all patients with a working diagnosis of lung cancer should be discussed at a lung cancer MDT meeting.</td>
<td>This is covered by the LUCADA dataset.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early diagnosis clinics should be provided where possible for the investigation of patients with suspected lung cancer, because they are associated with faster diagnosis and less patient anxiety.</td>
<td>Percentage of patients with putative lung cancer who are seen in an early diagnosis clinic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All cancer units/centres should have one or more trained lung cancer nurse specialists to see patients before and after diagnosis, to provide continuing support, and to facilitate communication between the secondary care team (including the MDT), the patient's GP, the community team and the patient. Their role includes helping patients to access advice and support whenever they need it.</td>
<td>Percentage of patients seen by a trained lung cancer nurse specialist before and after diagnosis, who provides continuing support, facilitates communication between the secondary care team (including the MDT), the GP, the community team and the patient, and helps patients to access advice and support whenever they need it.</td>
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## 15 Bibliography

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Appendices 1-8 are provided in a separate document (CD-ROM attached)