



Title	Assessment of Photodynamic Therapy Using Porfimer Sodium for Esophageal, Bladder, and Lung Cancers
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Aim

To evaluate the efficacy of photodynamic therapy using porfimer sodium (PDT-PF) for its approved oncological indications.

Conclusions and results

In treating lung, bladder, and superficial esophageal cancers: Findings seem to indicate that PDT-PF has a therapeutic effect, but the evidence is insufficient to indicate any advantage over available treatments.

In palliative treatment of advanced esophageal cancer: Studies suggest, with a limited level of evidence, that the efficacy of PDT-PF is similar to other palliative treatments (Nd: Yag laser ablation; metal stents). The cost of PDT-PF is apparently much higher than stents, which are easy to use and already in widespread use.

In treating Barrett's esophagus: In-depth examination is needed of the long-term efficacy of PDT.

Recommendations

In treating lung, bladder, and superficial esophageal cancers: PDT-PF should be used only in clinical research, and public coverage should not be authorized.

In palliative treatment of advanced esophageal cancer: PDT-PF should be considered an option when recognized treatments are contraindicated.

In treating Barrett's esophagus: PDT-PF should be fully assessed before it is introduced in current practice.

Methods

A literature search strategy located two HTA agency reports, one French (1999) and one American (1997 and 2002). MEDLINE was searched for articles published between 01/97 and 12/03. Studies retrieved were assessed according to the scheme outlined in the Canadian Guide to Clinical Preventative Health Care.

Further research/reviews required

In palliative treatment of advanced esophageal cancer: The

efficacy of PDT-PF should undergo further clinical research.

In general: A technology watch should be implemented to track technological advances in PDT and, in particular, its new applications.