

# Routine HER2 Testing in Patients aged over 80 – Is it a step too far?

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# Background

NICE recommends routine testing for HER2 receptor status in all newly diagnosed breast cancers (1)

The recommended adjuvant treatment for HER2 positive cancers is:

- Single (or dual) mAb treatment against this receptor
- + Chemotherapy (adjuvant or neoadjuvant)



HOWEVER...there is a risk of significant cardiac toxicity with this treatment (1)

As per the NABCOP Report, the decision for chemotherapy should not be made solely based on chronological age. (2)

Not all patients are eligible for the treatment Yet everyone is tested for HER2

#HER-2much?





### Method

- Retrospective study
- Over 24 months (Sept '16 Sept '18)
- All new breast cancer pts > 80 yrs old
- We reviewed
  - tumour biology requested
  - adjuvant therapies received

Exclusions: males; recurrence

155 cancers (146 patients)

5 cancers (3.2%) not tested

1 cancer = insufficient tissue

149 cancers remaining

13 cancers (8.6%) = HER2 +ve

2 HER2 +ve patients = offered chemo

- a) 1 refused
- b) 1 not given, as disease progressed too fast

# Costs of Testing

Result obtained in our lab - £23.90 inc VAT

Additional cost required if needs to be sent for FISH - £81.89

= >£3,500/yr in our Trust for NO clinical change in management

Plus Laboratory Time .....

If we apply this to the NABCOP report database, they may have lost in excess of £400,000.



### Discussion

- > Breast cancer is common in women > 80 years of age. (3)
- ➤Our population is ageing.
- NABCOP report states, "the evidence for benefit in the over-80s is almost non-existent." (2)
- The WHO performance checklist is part of the breast MDT form.
- ➤ NHS resources are valuable **BUT** <u>limited</u>.
- Maybe it is now time to move away from a blanket policy on universal Her 2 testing to more individualised care

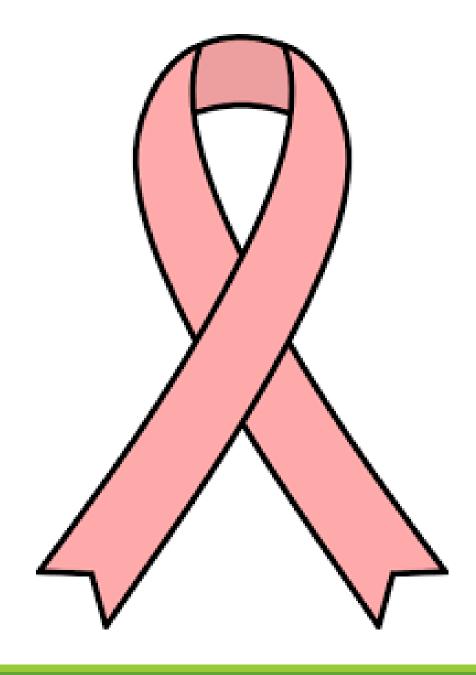
## Suggestions

- Early MDT discussion
- \*A personalised and individualised management strategy per case in this group
- Early geriatric involvement, perhaps during MDT
- ❖ More research needed to study the benefits of anti-HER2 treatment in the older population



### References

- 1. <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng101/chapter/Recommendations#diagnostic-assessment-and-adjuvant-therapy-planning">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng101/chapter/Recommendations#diagnostic-assessment-and-adjuvant-therapy-planning</a>
- 2. https://www.nabcop.org.uk/content/uploads/2018/08/NABCOP-2018-Annual-Report-v1.1.pdf
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- 4. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2007/jan/05/cancercare.health
- 5. Management of elderly patients with breast cancer: updated recommendations of the International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG) and European Society of Breast Cancer Specialists (EUSOMA)



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