

UNITED KINGDOM

20 months

Average delay between first global approval of oncology product and coverage in the UK.¹

355 days

Average wait time between new medicine launch in the UK and approval for reimbursement.²

41%

Share of medicines launched in the EU between 2017 and 2020 that are fully available to patients in England as of 2022.³

Access Restrictions in the U.K.

Rigid assessments of treatment value, government-driven decisions on formularies and coverage, and insufficient health care budgets have long stood in the way of U.K. patients who need access to the latest innovative medicines.

The high rate of rejections by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the group that advises the National Health Service (NHS) on coverage decisions and makes decisions based on a cost-effectiveness threshold of between £20,000 and £30,000 (\$23,137- \$34,706) per quality-adjusted life year (QALY), is one major reason why U.K. patients are often denied access to new medicines.

That's because medicines exceeding NICE's cost-per-QALY threshold are not deemed cost effective. This leaves the patients who need treatments that carry high development costs or treat small populations high and dry.⁴ In fact, for every 100 patients in peer countries who get access to a new medicine in its first year of launch, just 56 patients in the U.K. are given access to these treatments within one year of launch.⁵

"Who has the right to say you are not worth it? I think they are discriminating against young children, and I don't know how you can target them. The drug is there, and being used so they are putting a price tag on all kids' lives."

Parent of a child with cystic fibrosis in the U.K.⁶



In 2022, it was reported that health officials had ruled that olaparib, which treats men based on the genetic make-up of their cancer, is not cost effective. The article stated that National Health System watchdogs have been accused of stifling innovation by rejecting the first precision treatment for prostate cancer. "This disappointing decision means men with advanced prostate cancer in England and Wales who could benefit from olaparib will miss out on a treatment that could help them live longer and better."⁷

¹ Health Division, OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, "Addressing Challenges in Access to Oncology Medicines," www.oecd.org, p. 54.

² The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry "PwC - Transforming lives, raising productivity," 2022.

³ IQVIA, "EFPIA Patients W.A.I.T. Indicator 2021 Survey," 2022

⁴ Drummond, M. and Sorenson, C. Nasty or Nice? A Perspective on the Use of Health Technology Assessment in the United Kingdom. *Value in Health* 2009; 12(S2).

⁵ Office for Life Sciences, "Life sciences competitiveness indicators," July 2021.

⁶ "Don't take this miracle drug from our children' - parents' plea over possible withdrawal of 'life changer'" Shropshirestar.com, Nov. 29, 2023.

⁷ "NHS watchdog 'stifling innovation' by rejecting prostate cancer drug," The Telegraph, Sept. 6, 2022.