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NCCN Guidelines Panel: Head and Neck Cancers

On behalf of Merck & Co., Inc., I respectfully request the NCCN Head and Neck Cancers Panel to review the enclosed information for KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab), in reference to NCCN Guidelines V1.2016 for Head and Neck Cancers.

Specific changes requested:

We respectfully request that KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) be added as Immunotherapy for patients with recurrent or metastatic head and neck squamous cell carcinoma in the sections ADV-1 to ADV-4 (pages 64-67) and CHEM-A (pages 99-100).

FDA approval:

KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) is not approved for the treatment of patients with recurrent or metastatic head and neck squamous cell carcinoma. For additional information on FDA-approved indications, please see enclosed prescribing information (PI).[1]

Rationale:

Patients with recurrent or metastatic head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (R/M HNSCC) have a poor prognosis and few treatment options. In a phase 1b study (KEYNOTE-012, initial cohort) published by Seiwert *et al*, pembrolizumab was well tolerated and showed clinically meaningful antitumor activity with overall response rate (ORR) of 18% (8/45 patients; 95% CI: 8–32) in heavily pretreated R/M HNSCC patients irrespective of HPV status.[2]

In addition to this publication, results of the pooled analyses of initial (PD-L1+) and expansion (PD-L1+/PD-L1-) cohorts from KEYNOTE-012 were recently presented at ASCO 2016 showing ORR of 18% (34/192 patients; 95% CI: 13-24) in heavily pretreated R/M HNSCC patients regardless of PD-L1 status, with 65% (22/34 patients) of responders having ongoing responses at the time of analysis (85% of responses lasted for ≥6 months; 71% of responses lasted for ≥12 months). The median overall survival (OS) was 8 months (95% CI: 6-10) with 6-month OS rate of 58% and 12-month OS rate of 38%. Most common treatment-related AEs were fatigue (22%), hypothyroidism (10%), rash (9%), pruritus (8%), decreased appetite (8%), pyrexia (6%) and nausea (6%) with 6% of patients discontinuing due to a treatment-related AE and no treatment-related deaths.[3]

The following resources are submitted to assist the committee with their review:

1. KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) prescribing information. Merck & Co., Inc.

2. Seiwert TY *et al*. Safety and clinical activity of pembrolizumab for treatment of recurrent or metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (KEYNOTE-012): an open-label, multicentre, phase 1b trial. Lancet Oncol 2016. Published Online May 27, 2016 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(16)30066-3

3. Mehra R *et al*. Efficacy and safety of pembrolizumab in recurrent/metastatic head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (R/M HNSCC): pooled analyses after long-term follow-up in KEYNOTE-012. J Clin Oncol 2016; 34 (suppl; abstr 6012). Presented at American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting; June 3-7, 2016; Chicago, IL.

Thank you for considering this request. Below is my contact information should you need to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

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