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OHTAC NEWS & UPDATES

Positron emission tomography (PET) scanning in Ontario

Ontario is making PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under conditions where PET scans have been proven to be clinically effective. The government is making PET scanning available as an insured service this fall for certain evidence-based health indications, based on results from the Ontario studies of its effectiveness on patient outcomes. By October 2009, insured PET scans will be performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay.

Ontario has become the global leader in evaluating the role of PET in cancer and heart disease and has attracted international interest and endorsement of its approach. The evidence to support the clinical use of PET in cancer cases has been developed through a series of large clinical trials conducted by Ontario physicians and the Ontario Clinical Oncology Group at McMaster University, and through the synthesis of medical literature by Cancer Care Ontario's Program in Evidence-Based Care. The evidence for a role for PET in the assessment of severe cardiac dysfunction has been generated through a major registry study led by the Ottawa Heart Institute.

PET scanning is a nuclear medicine diagnostic imaging exam. It can provide information on both the location and the extent of the metabolic activity of abnormal tissues including cancer and has the potential to identify areas of abnormal metabolic activity that aren't always found through the use of MRIs or CT scans. For the services that will be insured, PET is useful in determining the stage or extent of some cancers to aid in treatment decisions. PET has also been found to be useful in making treatment decisions in certain advanced heart conditions. To learn more about PET scanning, please see the August 31, 2008 Ontario [PET Scan Primer](#).

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will ensure that resources are in place to continue clinical evaluations for additional health indications where PET scanning may prove beneficial. For individuals with indications for which PET scans are not currently funded, physicians will continue to be able to make requests through the PET Access Program in which funding applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

High Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) report now available for prostate cancer

The Program in Evidence-Based Care (PEBC) at Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) recently published the results of a systematic review evaluating high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) for the treatment of patients with localized prostate cancer. The review found that there was a lack of randomized controlled trials to compare localized treatments for prostate cancer. As such, the CCO considers HIFU an investigational treatment that should be restricted to clinical trials and for patients without other treatment options. The results of their evidence-based review state that *"HIFU cannot currently be recommended as an alternative to accepted curative treatment approaches for localized prostate cancer."* Some areas of uncertainty include efficacy and patient safety over the long-term as there are no appropriate prospective studies with a sufficient follow-up period.

The report, entitled, *"High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound for Prostate Cancer"* was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and is now available [online](#).

Note: This re-issue of the OHTAC e-Bulletin, Issue 4, corrects an earlier version where the above subtitle was: "High Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) now available for prostate cancer", rather than the corrected: "High Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) report now available for prostate cancer." OHTAC apologizes for any confusion this may have caused.

NEW AND UPCOMING REPORTS FROM MAS

The summer has been a busy time for MAS and OHTAC, with the recent completion of a number of evidence-based analyses and reports. The following reports will be published in September and can be accessed online as soon as they become available at the [Ontario Health Technology Assessment Series website](#).

1. *Diabetes Strategy Evidence Platform*. This report is a 'mega-analysis' of the primary strategies used for the treatment and management of diabetes and consists of seven subtopic reports, as well as a synthesis report summarizing their results. The reports included are:

- *Behavioural Interventions for Type 2 Diabetes*
- *Bariatric Surgery for People with Diabetes and Morbid Obesity*
- *Community-Based Care for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes*
- *Continuous Subcutaneous Insulin Infusion (CSII) Pumps for Type 1 and Type 2 Adult Diabetic Populations*
- *Home Telemonitoring for Type 2 Diabetes*
- *Application of the Ontario Diabetes Economic Model (ODEM) to Determine the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Impact of Selected Type 2 Diabetes Interventions in Ontario*

2. *Specialized multidisciplinary community-based care series*. This report is a 'mega-analysis' of community-based care and consists of two subtopic reports, as well as a synthesis report summarizing their results. The reports included are:

- *Community-Based Care for the Specialized Management of Heart Failure*
- *Community-Based Care for Chronic Wound Management*

Please note that a related title, *Community-Based Care for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes*, will also be posted with the *Diabetes Strategy Evidence Platform*

3. *Intraocular Lenses for the Treatment of Age-Related Cataracts*
4. *Optical Coherence Tomography for Age-Related Macular Degeneration and Diabetic Macular Edema*
5. *Oral Appliances for Obstructive Sleep Apnea*
6. *Phakic Intraocular Lenses for the Treatment of Low to High Refractive Errors*
7. *Point-of-Care International Normalized Ratio (INR) Monitoring Devices for Patients on Long-term Oral Anticoagulation Therapy*
8. *Screening Methods for Early Detection of Colorectal Cancers and Polyps*. This report is a 'mega-analysis' of the technologies used for screening for CRC and consists of five subtopic reports, as well as a synthesis report summarizing their results. The reports included are:
 - *Capsule Endoscopy for Colorectal Cancer Screening*
 - *Computed Tomographic (CT) Colonography for Colorectal Cancer Screening*
 - *Flexible Sigmoidoscopy for Colorectal Cancer Screening*
 - *Fecal Occult Blood Test for Colorectal Cancer Screening*
 - *Magnetic Resonance (MR) Colonography for Colorectal Cancer Screening*

COMING SOON

The following reports are posted for **Public Engagement** until October 3. It is anticipated that they will be completed and posted as final over the next month:

- *Airway Clearance Devices for Cystic Fibrosis*
- *Ultraviolet Phototherapy Management of Moderate-to-Severe Plaque Psoriasis*
- *Cancer Screening with Digital Mammography for Women at Average Risk for Breast Cancer, MRI for Women at High Risk*

Introducing Rapid Reviews

The Medical Advisory Secretariat (MAS) often receives requests to provide rapid responses to questions about new or previously reviewed health technologies. In the case of previously reviewed technologies, a full health technology assessment will be warranted if there is sufficient new evidence available or if other circumstances surrounding the technology have changed (such as the licensing of new and related devices or changes to the way a technology is used). For these technology reviews, a new report will be created and the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee (OHTAC) may modify its previous recommendations, which are eventually published as part of the [Ontario Health Technology Assessment Series](#).

Beginning in September 2009, MAS will publish Rapid Reviews for technologies that do not meet the criteria for a full update. The following **Rapid Reviews** will be posted within the next few weeks:

- *Gastric Electrical Stimulation*
- *Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding (LAGB): Safety Update*