

Why surgeries should purchase cancer drugs

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Many surgeries avoid purchasing cancer drugs due to the high cost, but this means they miss out on the profits that are available. In this fact sheet we explain how surgeries can increase their profits by purchasing and managing the use of these drugs.

Cancer drugs administered in surgery Zoladex, Prostag and Decapaptyl in all their various forms are expensive: around £170 per patient per year.

Many surgeries have chosen not to purchase these items and instead issue prescriptions to patients who collect them from the pharmacy and then bring them to the surgery, but in doing so they are forgoing the profit that is available.

The table below gives the profits per patient per year including vat, dispensing fees and net of the NHS discount. (Note: that the discount varies on a per surgery basis and also throughout the year).

	Income	Cost	Profit
Zoladex 10.8mg	£1,070	£874	£196
Zoladex 3.6mg	£907	£725	£182
Prosta p11.25mg	£1,028	£888	£140
Prostag 3.75mg	£1,046	£888	£158
Decapeptyl 22.5mg	£939	£845	£95
Decapeptyl 11.25mg	£944	£845	£99
Decapeptyl 3.75mg	£962	£845	£117

We have found that there is approximately one patient per thousand being treated with these items. For example, a 6,000 patient surgery will have on average 6 patients who are receiving these items and therefore the surgery will benefit from an increase in profit per year of £600 -£1,200.

Why do surgeries avoid purchasing Some surgeries are not purchasing these items as they are concerned about:

- Cash flow and money tied up
- Paying too much for the item and so making a loss
- Patients leaving the surgery and so items not being used

- Damage to items and before use and the surgery having to bear the cost
- Prescriptions not being raised and therefore not being reclaimed.

These concerns are all valid, but there are some simple measures the surgery can take to mitigate these risks.

Purchase the drugs and manage the risks

1. Assign overall responsibility

The items need to be tracked through the surgery, from when they are ordered to the reimbursement income being received.

Responsibility should be assigned to a single individual to track every stage.

2. Establish a simple system

Use a spreadsheet to track the patients and the items. There will only be a handful of patients so each named individual and the purchase of their drugs for their next visit can be easily tracked.

