

Primary progressive and relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis treated with ocrelizumab

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Three phase three clinical studies using the drug ocrelizumab to treat patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) have yielded positive results for treating two forms of the disease and the first ever positive results for a treatment for the less common primary progressive form (PPMS).

MS is a condition of the central nervous system in which myelin, the coating around nerves, is damaged causing vision problems, stiffness, spasms and other symptoms. MS affects around 120,000 people in the UK and millions worldwide and symptoms most commonly emerge in those aged between 20 and 40. About 85 per cent of all cases are in the relapsing remitting form (RMS) which is characterised by attacks of the disease that interspersed by relatively symptom-free periods.

In two trials, those with RMS who were treated with ocrelizumab found their frequency of attacks reduced by 45 per cent compared with other treatments and the progression of their symptoms delayed. The third trial, on 732 patients with PPMS, found that those treated with the drug had a reduction in the progression of clinical disability of 24 per cent. There are currently no approved treatments for PPMS.

Professor Gavin Giovannoni, Chair of Neurology at QMUL's Blizard Institute, said: "The phase III ocrelizumab results for both PPMS and RMS, in my opinion, are a game changer for the clinical community. These data demonstrate that B-cell targeting can significantly modify the disease, which in effect means a more positive outlook for patients. The important next step is for regulators to enable the use of ocrelizumab

across the spectrum of PPMS and RMS, and for treatment to be provided as soon after diagnosis as possible to provide optimal outcomes, with the potential to improve [patients'](#) quality of life in the long-term."

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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