



## **KEYTRUDA® registered for treatment of lung cancer**

**April 20**, 2017, Merck Sharp & Dohme Limited (MSD) today announced KEYTRUDA® (pembrolizumab) has now received its second Medsafe registration for lung cancer.

KEYTRUDA, which was funded for melanoma last year, is now registered for PD-L1 positive patients in both pre-treated and untreated advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

Paul Smith, MSD New Zealand Director, says, “This KEYTRUDA registration has the potential to transform the way lung cancer is treated in New Zealand and is particularly important for patients who express PD-L1. PD-L1 is a protein expressed by cancer cells to evade the immune system.

“The recent KEYNOTE-024 clinical trial results have been so compelling that trial investigators believe KEYTRUDA should replace platinum-based chemotherapy to become the new “Standard of Care” for untreated advanced NSCLC that expresses high levels of PD-L1.<sup>1</sup>

“Chemotherapy has long been the standard of care for advanced NSCLC; however the latest data from the KEYNOTE-024 trial demonstrates superior overall survival with KEYTRUDA, compared to chemotherapy in patients with high PD-L1 expression.<sup>2</sup>

“In light of that trial data, the external data and safety monitoring committee recommended that the study be stopped early to give the patients who were receiving chemotherapy the opportunity to receive KEYTRUDA.”<sup>2</sup>

“Lung cancer is New Zealand’s biggest cancer killer, accounting for more than 1,600 deaths per year.<sup>3</sup> More people die of lung cancer, than of breast cancer, prostate cancer and melanoma combined.”<sup>3</sup>

Philip Hope, CEO of Lung Foundation New Zealand, says, “This KEYTRUDA lung cancer registration is a hugely welcome step forward in ensuring New Zealanders can benefit from this new generation of treatments. I hope that this medicine will be made available on a funded basis to all New Zealanders with life-threatening lung cancer.

“As New Zealanders we need to acknowledge the gravity of this disease and look at ways we can work together to prevent it, treat it and ultimately save lives. Lung cancer often affects the most disadvantaged with male lung cancer rates in the most deprived areas 3.2 times higher than those in the least deprived areas.<sup>4</sup>

“Lung cancer can affect anyone, not just smokers; in fact, one in five people diagnosed with lung cancer have never smoked.<sup>3</sup>

“It also has a significant impact on Maori compared to the non-Maori population with rates three - four times higher in Maori men and women respectively.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul Smith says, “MSD has made an application to PHARMAC for funding of KEYTRUDA in advanced NSCLC. We hope that PHARMAC can work with urgency to provide lung cancer patients with a new treatment option, and we believe it is possible to fund KEYTRUDA for this group of patients as early as 1 July.

“Patients wanting to access KEYTRUDA should seek further advice from their cancer specialist about the options that may benefit them.”

**-ENDS-**

## References

1. ESMO 2016 Press Release: Pembrolizumab New Option for First Line Treatment of Patients with Advanced Lung Cancer and High PD-L1 Expression
  2. Reck et al, Pembrolizumab versus chemotherapy for PD-L1 Positive Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: The New England Journal of Medicine 2016
  3. Lung Foundation New Zealand website. Last accessed March 2017
  4. Ministry of Health Cancer New Registrations and Deaths 2011
  5. Cancer New Registrations and deaths 2013
- \* Consent was obtained from Philip Hope, CEO of Lung Foundation New Zealand

## **KEYTRUDA (pembrolizumab) 50mg powder for infusion** KEYTRUDA is a **Prescription Only Medicine**

**Use:** KEYTRUDA is used:

- in the treatment of melanoma which cannot be removed by surgery alone or when it has spread to multiple sites in the body.
- In the treatment of a kind of lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

**Side effects:** Sore throat/discomfort swallowing, reduced red blood cell count, over- or under-active thyroid, decreased appetite, dizziness, headache, cough, shortness of breath, , irregular heartbeat, chest pain (myocarditis), abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, itching , skin blistering, peeling or sores, ulcers in mouth or in lining of nose, throat or genital area, redness of the skin, patches of discolouration, rash, joint pain, back pain, muscle pain or weakness, pain or swelling in the extremities, unusual weakness, fevers or chills, feeling tired, inflammation of the kidney, colon or lung, liver disease, lesions within the pituitary gland, decreased sodium levels in the blood. You may experience more than one side effect at the same time.

All medicines have risks and benefits. Talk to your doctor to see if KEYTRUDA is right for you. KEYTRUDA is a funded medicine for melanoma patients– restrictions apply. KEYTRUDA is an unfunded medicine for NSCLC patients. Ask your health professional the cost of the medicine and any other medical fees that may apply. Use only as directed and if symptoms continue or you have side effects, see your doctor, pharmacist, or health professional.

Based on data sheet prepared 21 March 2017. Marketed by: Merck Sharp & Dohme (New Zealand) Limited, Newmarket, Auckland. For additional product information, consult the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI), available on request, phone 0800 500 673 or refer to the Medsafe website [www.medsafe.govt.nz](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz).

Copyright © 2017 Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., a subsidiary of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, NJ, USA. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2017 Merck Sharp & Dohme (New Zealand) Pty Limited. Level 3, 123 Carlton Gore Road, Newmarket, Auckland. All rights reserved. ONCO -1215619-0000 TAPS NA 9021 First Issued April 2017

