

Letters to the Editor

14 July 2016



Transplant threat

Sir, NHS England's decision to deny funding for second stem cell transplants is of grave concern to those of us in the transplant community.

We are protesting against a misguided decision which represents a troubling step backwards for the health service in England. It will mean that those with blood cancer or blood disorders who have already had one donor transplant and relapse will be denied the treatment that offers them their best chance of survival.

With this decision, NHS England is ignoring the advice of the clinical community, thereby effectively handing most of these patients a death sentence. Without a second stem cell transplant many of these patients will die. With another transplant there is hope; evidence suggests there is a one in three chance that they will achieve the milestone of five-year survival.

There are many people alive today, leading fulfilling and active lives with their families, after a second transplant. If a patient is willing to undergo the procedure, if their consultant believes a transplant is their best option, and if a donor is willing to provide their stem cells, it is devastating that NHS England will deny them a second chance of life.

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