

# NHS cleared to give drug that eases arthritis pain for 50,000

◆ A drug that promises pain relief for up to 50,000 of the worst-suffering arthritis patients will be made available on the NHS, health officials have ruled.

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence said yesterday that sarilumab had to be given to patients with rheumatoid arthritis who have not responded to existing therapies.

Delivered by fortnightly injection, the drug is designed to stifle a critical part of the inflammation

that damages patients' joints. It does this by binding to the interleukin-6 receptor, whose protein contributes to the pathological inflammation.

More than 400,000 people in the UK suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, where the immune system attacks tissues in the knees, elbows, wrists and other joints.

About one in 10 of these does not respond to the NHS's first drug of choice.

The jab has outperformed its bestselling rival by 50 per cent in one clinical trial.

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