

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=article&o=32572>

## Update: Answer to some common questions

NICE responds to enquiries regarding Technology Appraisal Guidance No 56: Tension-free vaginal tape (Gynecare TVT) for stress incontinence published in February 2003.

The Institute has received a number of enquiries relating to the above guidance. The answers to some common questions are provided below.

**Q: Has NICE assessed all products / systems available to the NHS for stress incontinence?**

A: No. Topics for the NICE work programme are selected by the Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly Government. This technology appraisal guidance process began in December 2001 and NICE was only asked to assess the clinical and cost effectiveness of Gynecare TVT which means that NICE was not asked to, and have not looked at, any other products which may perform a similar role as Gynecare TVT.

**Q: Has NICE 'approved' Gynecare TVT?**

A: No. NICE is not a regulatory body and it does not approve technologies for use. NICE provides the NHS in England and Wales with guidance on the clinical and cost effectiveness of the specific technology it has considered. In this case NICE issued guidance on where Gynecare TVT was considered to be clinically and cost effective. The guidance states that Gynecare TVT 'is recommended as one of a range of surgical options for women with uncomplicated urodynamic stress incontinence in whom conservative management has failed'.

**Q: Does the NICE guidance mean that Gynecare TVT should replace all products/ systems for stress incontinence in the NHS?**

A: NICE cannot answer this question as we have not conducted a comparative analysis. The NICE guidance states that Gynecare TVT 'is recommended as one of a range of surgical options for women with uncomplicated urodynamic stress incontinence in whom conservative management has failed'. People commissioning NHS care or purchasing products/ systems will consider locally the cost and benefits of Gynecare TVT alongside the other options available to them and the women they provide care for. Note the evidence considered in the NICE appraisal related only to the Gynecare TVT device made by Ethicon.

**Q: Does the NICE guidance mean that all women who have not had their stress incontinence successfully managed with conservative treatments should now be receiving Gynecare TVT in the NHS?**

A: Not necessarily. The NICE guidance clearly states that it "does not override the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer." This means that women with stress incontinence should discuss with their health professional the options available to them and that Gynecare TVT should be one of the options they discuss.