UK NSC neuroblastoma recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend universal screening for neuroblastoma in children.

Neuroblastoma is one of the most common forms of cancer in children under five. The cancer is a form of tumour (an abnormal growth of tissue) found in particular parts of the body. Neuroblastoma tumours may sometimes reduce in size or disappear with or without treatment. However they can also continue to grow and may progress to life-threatening disease.

Screening has been suggested as it may find cancer earlier and allow treatment before it becomes life threatening.

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

• there is no evidence of a screening test that would only detect people with Neuroblastoma needing treatment

• some low quality studies suggest screening at a later age may ensure only children who would benefit from treatment are detected. However no high quality studies have assessed the effect of screening at 18 months. This is either compared to no screening, or to screening at six or 12 months

• no studies addressed the main concern that screening could lead to treating more people who would not have needed treatment

• ultimately, there is no evidence that screening would reduce deaths from neuroblastoma

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC’s neuroblastoma recommendation, please visit:

legacy.screening.nhs.uk/neuroblastoma

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises ministers and the NHS in the 4 UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-national-screening-committee-uk-ncsc. The UK NSC evidence review process is described at www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-ncsc-evidence-review-process and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations.

The UK NSC secretariat is hosted by Public Health England (www.gov.uk/phe).