



Nice has been criticised for ruling against the prescription of expensive new drugs on the grounds that they are not cost-effective.

But Sir Michael told the paper that most of Nice's recommendations were in favour of prescription and that it was other bodies that blocked the drugs' use.

Sir Michael criticised the local lists of approved medicines drawn up across the NHS which 'second-guess' and sometimes ignore Nice recommendations.

While patient groups for particular diseases 'often helped by pharmaceutical companies' have attacked Nice for advising against the use of some expensive new medicines, Sir Michael said they should be directing more criticism instead to the drug companies for charging high prices.

The government's own innovation review recognised the problem by pledging a Nice 'compliance regime' to reduce regional variation 'the so-called 'postcode lottery' - and to improve adherence to the agency's guidelines.

It cautioned that local decisions should not act as a barrier to the medicines that Nice had approved.