

Avastin – Your Money Or Your Life

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Almost exactly two years ago, in February 2004, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted approval to Avastin, a new kind of anti-cancer drug. In contrast to traditional chemotherapy, which indiscriminately kills all rapidly dividing cells (including healthy ones), Avastin works highly selectively. For this reason it is known as a 'targeted' drug.

Several targeted drugs have now been approved for use in cancer, but Avastin was the first of its particular type to be licensed by the FDA. Avastin is what is called an 'angiogenesis inhibitor.' These drugs are designed to prevent tumors from developing new blood vessels, thereby halting their supply of needed nutrients and stalling their growth.

Avastin was initially only approved for use in advanced colorectal cancer. However, that fact has not prevented doctors from using it in an 'off label' capacity for other diseases as well. For example, Avastin is currently being used in an investigational capacity in breast, lung, ovarian and pancreatic cancer. The drug's manufacturer, Genentech, plans to submit applications to the FDA for approval of Avastin in an expanded variety of settings.

The advent of targeted agents over the past few years seemed to promise a more rational and subtle approach to the treatment of cancer. Thirty years of chemotherapy have not appreciably dented the rate of cancer deaths worldwide. Clearly, a new approach is long overdue. Could targeted agents such as Avastin be the harbinger of a new era in cancer treatment?

This 19-page report, "Avastin – Your Money Or Your Life" gives full details on the clinical trials that led to the initial FDA approval of the drug, as well as the status of current clinical trials for indications other than colorectal cancer, especially breast and lung cancer. I also discuss the mounting evidence of Avastin's disturbing side effects, and analyze the potential cost, both to individuals and to society, of the premature approval of enormously expensive drugs such as Avastin.

The special report on Avastin can be purchased for \$9.95 and downloaded directly from our Web site, by clicking here .