

Britain disallowing two cancer drugs

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The watchdog for Britain's National Health Service won't allow doctors to prescribe two new drugs for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer.

According to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, Avastin and Erbitux are not cost-effective, the Times of London reports.

The two drugs work by targeting a factor that stimulates the growth of blood vessels needed by tumors. Treatment with them can cost as much as \$201,000.

The panel concluded the drugs have not been proven to be more effective than currently available treatments and do not pass Britain's cost effectiveness standards.

"The NHS of 2006 is, it seems, content to fund an \$18 billion overspend on information technology but not give patients treatments that can help them live longer," says Michael Wickham, chief executive of Bowel Cancer UK.

Opponents of the government decision will have a chance to appeal before it becomes final in November.

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