

EU approves Avastin for lung cancer

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The European Union has approved the anti-cancer drug Avastin as a first-line treatment for advanced lung cancer.

European officials said the drug, which is already approved in the United States, can be used as a first-line treatment for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer in combination with platinum-based chemotherapy.

Swiss drug maker Roche said Avastin is the only first-line therapy to demonstrate improved survival benefits beyond one year in patients with advanced lung cancer, the company said Friday in a release.

Roche said Avastin is the first treatment that inhibits angiogenesis, which is the growth of a network of blood vessels that supply nutrients and oxygen to cancerous tissues.

Avastin targets a naturally occurring protein called VEGF (Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor), a key mediator of angiogenesis, thus choking off the blood supply that is essential for the growth of the tumor and its spread throughout the body

The drug is also used in the treatment of breast, colorectal and kidney cancers.

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