

Novartis tries to make UK hospitals use \$1000 drug

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(AP) -- Drug maker Novartis says it is taking legal action in Britain to make hospitals use an eye drug that costs 700 pounds (\$1,130) per shot instead of a cheaper one that costs 60 pounds (\$97).

According to the U.K.'s health watchdog, Lucentis is the only drug recommended to treat the eye problem, macular degeneration.

However, the much cheaper Avastin, a cancer drug, is widely prescribed for macular degeneration, though it is not officially approved. Last year, four hospitals in southern England decided they would pay for Avastin when it was prescribed by a doctor.

Both drugs are made by Novartis.

In a statement Tuesday, Novartis said it was demanding a judicial review to make the hospitals use [Lucentis](#) rather than [Avastin](#).

Patient groups called for an independent appraisal to determine which drug should be used.

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