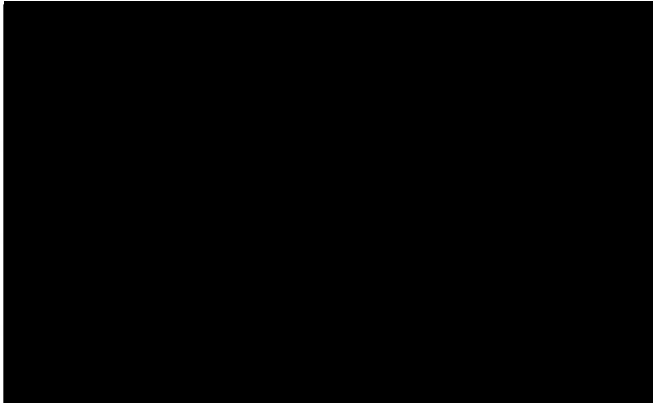


18 May 2020



Re Official Information Request – Use of Avastin in hospital

I refer to your official information request dated 16 March 2020 requesting the following information.

Is the drug Avastin used to treat cancers/administered to any patients in the DHBs public hospitals?

If so, what is the drug used to treat and how many patients are treated with it?

Auckland DHB does not treat cancer patients with Avastin outside of clinical trials.

Ophthalmology uses Avastin (bevacizumab) for treatment of wet macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusions and retinopathy of prematurity and a few other less common diseases. The typical dose is very small (0.05ml = 1.25 mg) and the drug is drawn up into syringes by the hospital pharmacy. The treatment is via an ongoing course with injections every month or with longer intervening intervals to maintain vision.

Avastin is the primary drug for treatment of the above conditions as directed by Pharmac and if people fail to respond to this treatment then the second line anti-VEGf agent is Eylea (alibercept) is used (probably in about 10-20% of cases).

Ophthalmology performs approximately 1200-1300 injections each month for treatment of these conditions, and the numbers continue to increase year on year. We continued to provide Avastin injections over the COVID-19 lockdown period.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive