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FDA approves Avastin for cervical cancer

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Singapore: US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a new use for Genentech's Avastin (bevacizumab) to treat patients with persistent, recurrent or late-stage (metastatic) cervical cancer.

Avastin is indicated for brain cancer, lung cancer, colon cancer and kidney cancer.

Cervical cancer grows in the tissues of the lower part of the uterus known as the cervix. It commonly occurs when human papillomaviruses (HPV), a virus that spreads through sexual contact, cause cells to become cancerous.

Avastin works by interfering with the blood vessels that fuel the development of cancerous cells. The new indication for cervical cancer is approved for use in combination with chemotherapy drugs paclitaxel and cisplatin or in combination with paclitaxel and topotecan.

"Avastin is the first drug approved for patients with late-stage cervical cancer since the 2006 approval of topotecan with cisplatin," said Dr Richard Pazdur, director of the Office of hematology and oncology products in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "It is also the first biologic agent approved for patients with late-stage cervical cancer and was approved in less than four months under the FDA's priority review program, demonstrating the agency's commitment to making promising therapies available to patients faster."

FDA reviewed Avastin for treatment of patients with cervical cancer under its priority review program because the drug demonstrated the potential to be a significant improvement in safety or effectiveness over available therapy in the treatment of a serious condition.