Including off-label drug indications in HTA jeopardizes patient health and discourages innovation

Description

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The innovative development of anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) drugs is examined, together with the impact that these drugs have had on patient health. The health technology assessment (HTA) review of anti-VEGF drugs that took place in Canada in 2015 is considered from both innovation and patient health perspectives. HTA is used by publicly funded drug plans to guide insurance coverage and reimbursement decisions. In early 2015, provincial governments requested that CADTH compare the relative cost-effectiveness of 3 drugs: Lucentis, Eylea and Avastin, for the treatment of retinal conditions. Including Avastin in the HTA was controversial because the drug does not have Health Canada safety approval for the indication.

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