

Britain snubs costly Novartis blood cancer drug

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British health authorities said on Wednesday they would not recommend Jakavi, a drug produced by Swiss pharmaceutical company Novartis to treat a rare form of blood cancer, deeming it too expensive.

Jakavi, or Ruxolitinib, was "clinically effective but could not be considered a cost-effective use of (the National Health Services') resources," the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) said in a statement.

The drug is used to treat myelofibrosis, a rare type of [blood cancer](#) or [chronic leukemia](#).

While NICE concluded that Ruxolitinib effectively treated symptoms and "could offer survival benefit," it lamented that it was simply too expensive to impose on the [public health system](#), since it would mean diverting costs from elsewhere.

"It is disappointing not to be able to recommend this new treatment in our preliminary recommendations," it said.

Novartis, which is facing a wave of expiring patents on its traditional big-sellers, is working hard to multiply its new drug offerings like Javaki to ensure continued growth.

But like the rest of the pharmaceutical industry, the company has also had to deal with growing pricing pressure at a time when crisis-hit

countries are increasingly being forced to slash [health expenditures](#).

Last month it announced that its net sales in 2012 had slipped 3.0 percent year-on-year to \$56.7 billion (42.1 million euros).

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