

EU approves Novartis drug Signifor for Cushing's disease

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European Union regulators have given Swiss pharmaceutical group Novartis a green light to market its drug Signifor as a treatment for Cushing's disease, the company said Wednesday.

The group said it was the first time the EU has approved a drug to treat the [rare disease](#), which is caused by a tumour or growth on the pituitary gland and is generally treated surgically.

"The European Commission has approved Signifor (pasireotide) for the treatment of [adult patients](#) with Cushing's disease for whom surgery is not an option or for whom surgery has failed," Novartis said in a statement.

Cushing's disease causes fatigue, depression, [high blood pressure](#), upper-body obesity and a reddened moon face.

The approval follows phase-three clinical trials that found Cushing's patients who received two daily injections of Signifor for six months had reduced levels of cortisol, a stress hormone present in above-normal quantities in people with the disease.

Cushing's affects between one and two people per million each year.

Analysts at Zurich state-owned bank ZKB estimated 20,000 European patients could be treated with Signifor, generating potential sales of some \$700 million (529.3 million euros) for Novartis over five years.

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