Lenvima approved for common thyroid cancer

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(HealthDay)—Lenvima (lenvatinib) has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat differentiated thyroid cancer (DTC) that has progressed despite radioactive iodine therapy, the agency said Friday in a news release.

DTC is the most common type of thyroid cancer, the FDA said. Nearly 63,000 Americans were diagnosed with thyroid cancer in 2014 and about 1,890 died from it, according to the U.S. National Cancer Institute. The thyroid gland is in the neck and helps regulate the body's metabolism.

Lenvima is from a class of drugs called kinase inhibitors, which block certain proteins that spur the growth of cancer cells. The drug was clinically evaluated among 392 people with DTC. Those given the new drug lived an average of 18.3 months without cancer progression, compared with 3.6 months among people given a placebo.

Lenvima's most common side effects included high blood pressure, fatigue, diarrhea, joint and muscle pain, loss of appetite, nausea, inflammation of the mouth's lining, headache, vomiting and excess protein in the urine.

More serious side effects included heart failure, blot clot formation, liver and kidney damage, and risks to the unborn child if a female user became pregnant.

Lenvima is marketed by Eisai Inc., based in Woodcliff Lake, N.J.

More information: The FDA has more about this approval.

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