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By Sarah-Jane Tasker 6 April 2018

New Breast Cancer Drug Reduces Risk of Relapse

Australians with breast cancer can apply to receive a drug that reduces the risk of cancer returning, under a special access program.

Nerlynx is targeted for use in women with HER 2+ early breast cancer. One in four women diagnosed with this type of cancer can suffer a relapse in five years and it is believed that taking Nerlynx will prevent some of those recurrences.

The drug's marketer in Australia, Specialised Therapeutics, is seeking regulatory approval of the drug for it to be reimbursed by the government and has launched the special access program while it awaits regulatory approval.

Under the program, select patients in Australia would be provided access to the medicine, where appropriate and when permitted by relevant regulatory authorities. In all cases, the patient must have a special clinical need that cannot be met by currently approved and available medicines.

Principal trial investigator of the drug, Arlene Chan, has previously highlighted that the availability of Nerlynx in Australia and other regions was an important step in reducing recurrence in HER 2+ early breast cancer.

"My hope and expectation is that with longer follow-up, not only will recurrence rates be reduced, but they will show that the use of Nerlynx will improve overall survival," the world renowned Perth oncologist said.

