

Times - Letter to the Editor: Vital Drug Funding

Sir, Bisphosphonates are drugs costing just 43p a day that could prevent one in ten breast cancer deaths. However, confusion over which health body should pay for them means that many patients are missing out on this treatment.

While commonly used to treat osteoporosis and advanced cancer, evidence published in 2015 demonstrated their potential in early post-menopausal breast cancer patients to reduce the risk of the disease spreading and becoming incurable. Adopting them routinely in this way would save hundreds of lives each year and offer the NHS a long-term cost saving.

However, more than a year later, the lack of agreement — and clear guidance — on who should fund them has led to variation in access across England, with some clinical commissioning groups taking on this responsibility, while others haven't yet done so.

We therefore call on the health secretary to clarify who is responsible for funding these drugs, ensuring that all patients who could benefit are able to do so.

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