

International Society of Oncology Pharmacy Practitioners (ISOPP) – Oncology Pharmacotherapy and Applications of Biosimilars (OPAB) programme.

I would like to thank NZHPA and Roche for allowing me to join ISOPP to access the online biosimilars course. The course was free to members and consists of 10 modules, separated into 3 parts.

Part 1 covered fundamentals of biosimilars as well as management of breast and colorectal cancer. Part 2 included lung, gynaecological and upper GI cancer, and Part 3 covered kidney cancer, supportive care and implementation in of biosimilars in clinical practice.

The use of biosimilars increases patient access to expensive oncology medications, at both a population level and individual level. The course covered the regulatory approval process of biosimilars and extrapolation of registered indications. It was well timed with Pharmac funding biosimilar trastuzumab and widening access to gastric patients.

The tumour management modules discussed the international standard of care, and on reflection highlighted areas where publicly funded treatment in New Zealand is behind international standards. This course was especially relevant to my new role in private practice and discussed drug targets and side effect management of unfunded treatments we frequently use.

The biosimilars course finished on 31st December 2023, hopefully it will be updated and run again.

If you work in oncology or cytotoxic compounding and are interested in joining ISOPP, from 1st January 2024 it is now free. <https://www.isopp.org/>

