

Not in Cov protocol, but cocktail therapy claims flood insurers

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Kolkata: Insurers and third-party administrators (TPA) in Kolkata are witnessing a flood of queries and claims for Covid antibody cocktail therapy following insurance regulator IRDA's nod to the treatment earlier this month. Several hospitals have introduced day-care packages for the treatment and a number of claims for these have been registered with TPAs in the last fortnight.

Cocktail therapy has been removed from essential Covid treatment protocol in Bengal. But hospitals continue to use it, especially on elderly patients with comorbidities.

On January 7, the IRDA had issued a circular advising insurance companies not to reject cocktail therapy claims "under the pretext that it is an experimental treatment".

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- ▶ Cocktail therapy is not part of essential Covid treatment protocol but hospitals use it on the elderly and comorbid
- ▶ On Jan 7, IRDA issued a circular advising insurers to honour antibody cocktail treatment claims
- ▶ In last 15 days, some TPAs have witnessed a 500% surge in queries and 200% surge in insurance claims for the therapy
- ▶ Insurers and TPAs have started settling claims for antibody cocktail therapy

Sujay Mitra, assistant manager at National Insurance and a part of its medical team, said in the last few days the company had received multiple queries from both retail

and corporate customers on antibody cocktail therapy.

"We have received and settled some claims as well. But we think more claims will be made in the next 10-15 days as some claims were rejected prior to the IRDA advisory. It will take some more days to correctly assess the number of such claims," he said. As per established norms, reimbursement claims can be filed within 30 days of hospitalisation.

Mitra said since antibody cocktail treatment was mostly being administered in day-care packages, people were generally opting for reimbursement over cashless facility, which takes more time. "We'll now admit cashless claims too for cocktail therapy, but some people may prefer reimbursement because the amount is low," he added.

▶ '200% jump in claims', P 5

'200% jump in claims, 500% rise in queries after notice'

▶ Continued from P 1

Yotirmay Kundu of Heritage TPA said there was no clarity on the therapy till the first week of January but after the IRDA circular, there has been 200% jump in claims and over 500% jump in queries about the therapy. "We have settled some claims," he said.

C Bera, branch manager of Raksha TPA in Kolkata, said they too have settled some claims for antibody cocktail treatment but mostly from corporate customers and so the numbers were not that high.

Bhaskar Nerurkar, head of health claims at Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said they too were "supporting the method" and added that Covid claims, which had surged in the first two weeks of January in Kolkata, were now coming down. Sanjay Datta, chief underwriting and claims, ICICI Lombard said the company had received around 100 Covid intimations under cashless mode in the last 20 days from eastern India, of which 80%-90% were from Kolkata.

Alok Roy, chairman of Medica, said it had offered the therapy to many but now the numbers were coming down. Rupak Barua, group CEO of AMRI said response to the therapy in day-care was good.