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Desi generics firms pave way for cheaper hepatitis C drug – Times of India

If scaling up of HIV treatment globally was made possible by Indian generics companies, it looks like they are set to repeat this feat with hepatitis C treatment too. In a recent paper published in a medical journal, academics working on drug pricing calculated that generic sofosbuivir and daclatasvir combination used to treat hepatitis C could be produced for as little as $200 per patient per 12 week course. The same combination could cost almost $150,000 per patient for the same period in the US.

According to a recent WHO survey on Hepatitis C treatment, the combination is being sold in India for about Rs 46,500 or about $700 per patient for a three month regimen. With greater demand and scaling up of production the price is expected to fall further.

Clinical drug trial incident in France builds a case for strict phase-I norms in India – Hindu Business Line

It is being described by France's Health Minister Marisol Touraine as "an accident of exceptional gravity". Late last week, news reports emerged from France of an early stage clinical trial involving an experimental painkiller medicine that left one person brain dead and five hospitalised.

It is still early days to establish what caused the incident. Was it the experimental drug, or were protocols breached in administering the drug to volunteers participating in the Phase-I trial, where volunteers are exposed to the drug for the very first time.

But as France investigates the incident, its outcome will be closely watched by policymakers across the world so they can amend their laws, if need be.

India, for instance, does need strong laws governing “first in human” exposure or Phase-I trial of a medicine, say experts, on the early learnings from the incident in France.

Though India has been tightening its rules governing clinical trials, over the last three years, there still is much ground to cover. And in this case, as industry is encouraged to innovate in India, its time to tighten Phase-I norms, say experts.

Reference article: Times of India

2. Drug firms plan to ride next wave of growth in US – Business Standard

Indian drug companies are readying a pipeline of speciality generics and biosimilars to make the most of the next growth wave in the US market.

Speciality drugs have contributed almost two-thirds to the overall medicine spending growth in the US over the past five years.

A recent Edelweiss report, Pharmaceuticals--Time to Evolve, said biosimilars and inhalers would be 50 per cent of the opportunity, which most Indian companies would not be able to tap.

3. ISCR sees need to engage pharma cos in pharmacovigilance programme to promote patient safety – Pharmabiz

The Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR) now sees the need for pharma companies to be engaged in the Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI) to promote patient safety.

Adverse drug monitoring improves patient care, public health and provides a risk benefit assessment of medicine. It is also an effective mode of communication to the health professionals and the public, said Indu Nambiar, co-chair, Pharmacovigilance Council of ISCR and Senior Manager-Local Pharmacovigilance, Boehringer Ingelheim, India.

The developed countries like US and UK are known to report higher ADR than India. Increasing efforts to ensure serious adverse events (SAE) reporting from sponsor, investigator, and ethics committee are needed, she said at a panel discussion on Strengthening Pharmacovigilance for a Healthy India at the 67th IPC in Mysuru recently.

4. India, EU officials to meet today on FTA – Hindu Business Line

Senior officials of India and the European Union are expected to hold discussions on Monday on the stalled negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement.

“Both the sides would review the progress of talks and ways to move forward,” an official said.

Expressing disappointment and concern over the EU banning sale of around 700 pharma products, clinically tested by GVK Biosciences, India had in August last year deferred FTA talks with EU.

5. BioAsia 2016 to draw a distinct road-map to propel growth of lifescience industry – Pharmabiz

The Asia-Pacific biotechnology industry has been witnessing a growth phase on the back of several factors, such as cost effective manufacturing capabilities, improved clinical capabilities, growing health needs of large population base, exports and increasing government support among others. According to an industry report, the industry grew at the CAGR of 6.7 per cent between the years 2010-2014 to reach a total of US$ 77 billion in 2014. India is witnessing a new era of growth and opportunities in the life sciences/healthcare sectors.

With increasing pressure to reduce drug development costs and accelerate R&D programmes, the global companies have started setting up R&D centres in Asia to take advantage of cost-effective, yet highly skilled talent pool. India has emerged as a preferred destination for contract research and manufacturing activities, process re-engineering and innovative R&D to act as a single destination with various enablers in place. The country is aided by a large, highly skilled community of scientists and researchers. Additionally, the government's support in bringing a comprehensive IPR Policy, launch of 'Make in India' and financial support programmes, regulatory reforms etc. are expected to further boost the growth of life sciences industry.

6. Mobile app launched to help access free authentic data on patents for pharma industry – Pharmabiz

A team led by IPR expert Vijaykumar Shivpuje, assistant general manager, IPR, Micro Labs Limited has recently launched a mobile application called "VPATAPP" for obtaining relevant authentic data on patents for pharma industry professionals.

It connects the users to various free patent search websites to address the need of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and life sciences industries on relevant patent related information.

With this app, the industries would save the costs by minimizing outsourcing patent related work with help from freely available data.

The app is welcomed by the industry, law firms and is currently downloaded in 20+ countries in a short span of three months. "Often the industries end up paying huge costs for obtaining relevant authentic data, which is actually available free of cost. The app would serve the purpose of a single point reference point for such needs", says IPR expert Vijaykumar Shivpuje.

7. Govt to bear patent cost, relax procurement norms for startups – Business Standard

To encourage young entrepreneurs and innovation, government has decided to bear the entire cost of facilitation for filing of patents, trademarks or designs as well as relaxed public procurement norms for start-ups.

As per the action plan announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday, the start-ups would only have to pay the statutory fees.

"The central government shall bear the entire fees of the facilitators for any number of patents, trademarks or designs that a startup may file, and the start-ups shall bear the cost of only the statutory fees payable," the action plan said.

Similar article appeared in Financial Express, The Hindu, Indian Express

8. Act as Team India for better healthcare and sustainable development – Hindustan Times

The recently concluded Freedom Series between the Indian and South African cricket teams was a eulogy to the greatest leaders of peace, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. Both had a vision of a just and egalitarian society, and the bilateral series served as a reminder of their ideals and our duty to uphold them. However, the two countries still face huge challenges, especially on the health front.

9. NITI Aayog surrenders 56 posts of IES officers - Economic Times

NITI Aayog has surrendered 56 posts of Indian Economic Service (IES) officers who have been redeployed in different ministries and departments.

NITI Aayog had decided to trim the strength of IES Officers after the Prime Minister approved a task force's recommendations on restructuring NITI Aayog Secretariat.

Earlier in August 2015, it was decided that the total strength for the Team India Hub, Knowledge and Innovation Hub, Flexi Pool and the Support Framework in the NITI Secretariat would be 500 as against the earlier strength of 1,255.