

Date	:	October 05, 2016
Publication	:	Mint

# Biocon gears up to launch new drugs to treat diabetes, cancer

BY VISWANATH PILLA

viswanath.p@livemint.com

HYDERABAD



*The branded formulation unit contributed 12% to Biocon's revenues in 2015-16.*

HEMANT MISHRA/MINT

**B**iocon Ltd will launch new branded formulations of its own and introduce products licensed from others to treat diabetes and cancer in the coming months, a top official at the bio-pharmaceutical firm said.

It will also approach more doctors through field staff and use digital technologies to train doctors and build awareness among patients.

"The immediate priority is to expand our franchise for the offerings we have," said Suresh Subramanian, head of branded formulations (India) business at Biocon.

Biocon is in talks with prospective partners for in-licensing novel molecules to strengthen its portfolio, Subramanian said. He did not name these companies.

The branded formulation business contributed about 12% or Rs437.4 crore of Biocon's Rs3,570 crore revenues in 2015-16. Its other major businesses are biosimilars, small molecules and research services.

Subramanian said Biocon

will also introduce rapid-acting insulin analogs Lispro and Aspart to take on multinational firms that dominate the insulin segment in India.

According to US healthcare information provider IMS Health, the Indian diabetes drugs market was worth Rs8,400 crore at the end of February, growing at approximately 21% annually. An estimated 69.2 million people, or around 11% of the world diabetic population, live in India.

Biocon also expects launches of two key biosimilars, bevacizumab and adalimumab, in India in the near future, Subramanian said.

"Biosimilars is an attractive space, and with high entry barriers and limited competition,

Biocon clearly had the head start," said Afzaal Mohammed, a research analyst at Karvy Stock Broking Ltd. "However, the challenge was to get more physicians to prescribe its products. The Japanese approval of insulin Glargine in March has given a much needed credibility boost for the firm to take on its rivals."

Diabetes has emerged as the leading non-communicable disease in India. The market for insulins constitute a little less than a fourth of the overall anti-diabetes market—this is where Biocon sees a huge potential—but it faces stiff competition from Denmark-based Novo Nordisk A/S, US-based Eli Lilly & Co., France-based Sanofi SA and domestic rival Lupin Ltd.

Biocon, which markets human insulin and long-acting insulin Glargine, ranks fourth with less than 10% market share in India.

Biocon's Bevacizumab, the biosimilar version of Roche Holding AG's anti-cancer biologic drug Avastin, is in advanced stages of development. Adalimumab, the biosimilar version of AbbVie's Humira, is used to treat autoimmune disorders such as psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis.