

More MNC drug companies pop Indian patent pill

Pfizer, J&J, Zydus Cadila to launch their patented drugs in India

NEW WAVE

- ▶ MNC drug manufacturers are slowly gaining confidence in Indian IPR rules and their enforcement
- ▶ German Remedies to introduce interferon beta-1B under the brand name Betaferon
- ▶ J&J to bring its newly patented blood cancer treatment drug Velcade
- ▶ Eli Lilly to offer its leading antidepressants drugs
- ▶ Novartis is set to introduce its cardiovascular and cancer drugs soon



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Despite the US Federal Trade Representative keeping India on the watch list citing flaws in the new patent law introduced in January this year, the multinational drug manufacturers are slowly gaining confidence in the Indian IPR (intellectual property rights) rules and its enforcement.

Drug majors like Pfizer, Novartis and Eli Lilly are launching their patented blockbuster drugs, German drug maker Zydus Cadila and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) also plan to introduce their patented products in the India. This move by MNCs is interpreted as a sign of their growing confidence in India's IP rules and its protection from cloning by local companies through reverse engineering.

According to industry sources, a number of foreign pharmaceutical majors have finally shed their doubts about Indian IPR law and have decided to introduce their patented drugs. German Remedies, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Zydus Cadila group is hitting the Indian market with its interferon beta-

1B under the brand name Betaferon. The drug is used for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. At present no competing drug in this segment is available in India. German Remedies is marketing this subcutaneous injectable drug in the local market in alliance with Schering AG of Germany. Similarly, J&J has reportedly decided to bring its newly patented blood cancer treatment drug Velcade in the Indian market by the end of this year. The drug will be launched through J&J's subsidiary Janssen Cilag. This may be the first time that an MNC drug-maker is introducing a new drug in India soon after its discovery and obtaining US patent.

The US drug giant Eli Lilly has already announced its plans to offer its products, including its leading antidepressants drugs in India. Swiss drug-maker Novartis is set to introduce its cardiovascular and cancer drugs soon. Merck & Company too, is in the process of entering Indian market to manufacture and market its products. Another US drug-maker Cymbiotics in association with Cipla is in the process of introducing its new arthritis drug, Mobix. ♦