



BRITISH GENERIC MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

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Infliximab launch is milestone in development of UK biosimilars industry

- **Competition will allow more patients to be treated at lower cost**

The onset of biosimilar competition in the UK in Infliximab is another significant milestone in the development of the sector in this country according to the British Generic Manufacturers Association (BGMA).

The UK patent on the product expired yesterday and today (Feb 25th) biosimilar Infliximab products are launching which will be available to NHS clinicians and patients under separate brand names.

These are the first biosimilar launches since NICE updated its methods for providing guidance and advice on biosimilar medicines earlier this year.

Warwick Smith, Director General of the BGMA, said: "In our view 2015 represents a breakthrough year for biosimilars and the launch of biosimilar Infliximab products will be the start of a sea-change in their use. NICE has acknowledged that biosimilars have the potential to offer the NHS considerable cost savings, especially as they are often used to treat long-term conditions.

"This will enable the NHS to treat more patients with these life-changing products. Moving forward, in order to derive the most patient benefit, we need to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place which allow regulators, clinicians and payors to best utilise these medicines for their patients."

A biosimilar medicine is developed to be similar to an existing biological product. Biological medicines are produced in or derived from living systems, and are made up of proteins, sugars or nucleic acids.

They differ from generic drugs which have simpler chemical structures and are considered to be identical to their reference medicines. The characteristics of biologic drugs cannot be reproduced exactly.

To gain approval for use, biosimilar medicines have to demonstrate that they are as safe and as effective as the original reference medicine, and have the same quality.

Over the past 10 years there has been a rapid worldwide increase in the number of biological medicines that have received regulatory approval.

ENDS

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Notes for Editors:

The British Generic Manufacturers Association represents the interests of UK-based manufacturers and suppliers of generic medicines and promotes the development and understanding of the generic medicines industry in the United Kingdom.

Generic medicines contain the same active ingredient and are as effective as the equivalent brand and cost much less, making the NHS drugs bill affordable. More than two thirds of all medicines dispensed by the NHS are generics yet they cost only around 29% of the NHS drugs bill, a saving of more than £12.5billion in England & Wales alone. Without generics, the NHS drugs bill would be approximately twice its current level.

We represent the views and interests of our members and industry to the UK government, the devolved administrations, regulators, other relevant third parties, including where appropriate the Institutions of the European Union.