

Boehringer Aims For Top Slot With Anti-diabetes Drug Launch

Vikas Dandekar

Mumbai: The race for the top of India's fast growing anti-diabetes drugs market is heating up, with the Indian arm of German pharmaceutical drug firm Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) accelerating its plans to launch Jardiance, its latest bet in a new class of anti-diabetes drugs named SGLT-2 inhibitors (sodium glucose cotransporter 2).

Global firms such as Janssen Pharmaceuticals and AstraZeneca are ahead with their local launches in the same drug segment, but BI expects an edge

Race For Indian Diabetes Market

BI's Jardiance has unique benefits of reduction in cardiovascular risks



COMPETING DRUG BRANDS
Invokana, Forxiga



Indian Anti-diabetes drugs market

₹7378 cr
and growing at over 25%



Jardiance to be priced in the same range as comparable brands

with Jardiance in the backdrop of its recently disclosed clinical trial data that demonstrated a clutch of benefits in addition to offering better glucose control against existing compounds.

With Jardiance, BI has the advantage of significantly reducing cardiovascular risks associated with most patients with diabetes. To date, Jardiance is known to be the only anti-diabetes drug that has showed those benefits although results of clinical trials on similar drugs is awaited over the next two years.

Also, as a class, SGLT-2 compounds have shown significant weight reduction when pitted against older drugs that have often led to weight gain or have remained weight neutral. The long term clinical trial for empagliflozin — known as EMPA REG — was conducted on 7,000 patients, of which a large pool of patients were from India, top company executives told ET.

BI, which has a relatively new presence in India, has seen a strong acceptance for its existing offerings such as Trajenta and Trajenta Duo, two patented drugs that compete against sim-

ilar brands from Novartis, Merck and AstraZeneca.

Sharad Tyagi, MD, Boehringer Ingelheim, said the larger aim is to lead the segment and the benefits of Jardiance should see it emerge as a much stronger product in the market.

Tyagi said BI is "looking at seriously evaluating local partnering opportunities closely", but added the thought is more about building the value of the molecule and brand and how the science is presented. BI, for itself, has more than doubled its specialised field force for its anti-diabetes drugs from 160 around two years ago to 400.

A top BI official did not specify the expected price of Jardiance, but added it will be at a steep discount over its international rates and could be seen around the same levels as the existing comparable drugs in India.

AstraZeneca's competing brand Forxiga is available in India for 43 a tablet while Janssen's Invokana is marketed at 51 per tablet. The Indian market for anti-diabetes products is primarily formed by hundreds of branded generic drugs.

Company