Drug Makers Innovate with Financing Schemes for Cheaper Treatment

Strategy of experimenting with attractive offers allows pharma companies to protect their key products from compulsory licensing, price controls and also generate sales by making treatment affordable for patients. Companies such as Merck, Sharp & Dohme (MSD) or US-based Pfizer and others are offering a variety of schemes to make treatment affordable for patients in emerging countries.

Inadequate drug coverage in health insurance:

One of the key reasons that makes some patients unable to afford treatment is the lack of adequate insurance schemes which do not cover the cost of drugs, a situation that swells further when the costs are higher for new and advanced medicines.

Fullerity India, the MSD's financing partner, said it lent to patients below the poverty line because the company wants to ensure that a patient is not left behind in treatment. "We have found that a patient is not left behind in treatment due to lack of funds," said Balachandran Malar, executive vice president and head of business and marketing at Fullerity India.

"This year, nearly 30-40 million people fall into the poverty line because of contracted health shocks, and insurance schemes sometimes don't address the issue," said Deepak Patil, the deputy director of Aravind. "We are addressing this issue by providing a scheme that is low-cost and also includes medical care for patients who fall below the poverty line."