

# Sun Pharma, MSD tie up for diabetes drugs

fe Bureau

*W/A*

**Mumbai, Apr 25:** Merck & Co, known as MSD outside the US and Canada, and Sun Pharma have forged an India-specific strategic partnership agreement, under which Sun will have the right to market, promote and distribute MSD's diabetes products, sitagliptin and sitagliptin plus metformin, under different brand names in India. Earlier this month, the two companies had announced an equal joint venture to develop, manufacture and commercialise new combinations and formulations of innovative branded generics to more than 100 emerging countries across the globe.

The size of the overall oral anti diabetes market in India is ₹2,103 crore, as per ORG-IMS 2010. This is the first time that Sun Pharma is opting for a co-marketing arrangement with a multinational company for the Indian market. MSD has been selling the two diabetes formulations in India under the brand name Januvia (sitagliptin) and Janumet (sitagliptin plus metformin) since 2008. According to an MSD spokesperson, "MSD will continue to hold all rights of the brands and continue to market Januvia and Janumet as before," without disclosing the revenues from these brands for the company.

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Sun Pharma, however, will sell these drugs from MSD in the market under different brand names. Sun already has several diabetes products in the Indian market. "It is not a major challenge for Sun to market these products under the co-marketing arrangement, since these will be new products. Every year, we keep introducing new products into the market," said a Sun Pharma spokesperson. Sun Pharma shares were marginally down to close at Rs 445.35 on the BSE on Monday. KG Ananthkrishnan, managing director, MSD in India said, "The partnership with Sun Pharma is focused on increasing the market access of sitagliptin and sitagliptin plus metformin in India, which is an urgent need, given the high disease burden of type 2 diabetes in India and the role of these drugs in helping to address the same."

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