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Cipla to commercialise Molnupiravir for COVID-19 treatment

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Cipla Limited announced that it has signed a non-exclusive licensing agreement with MSD a tradename of Merck & Co, Inc, Kenilworth, NJ, US for the manufacturing and distribution of Molnupiravir, the investigational oral antiviral drug currently being studied in a Phase 3 trial for the treatment of non-hospitalised patients with confirmed COVID-19.

MSD is developing Molnupiravir in collaboration with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics. This agreement is a part of Cipla's efforts to enhance global access to treatments for patients affected by the pandemic.

As part of the agreement, Cipla will be permitted to manufacture, market and distribute Molnupiravir in India and more than 100 low and middle income countries. Cipla's extensive geographical and commercial footprint will help make this therapy accessible to more patients and markets.

Molnupiravir (EIDD-2801/MK-4482) is an investigational, orally bioavailable form of a potent ribonucleotide analog that inhibits the replication of multiple RNA viruses including SARS-CoV-2, the causative agent of COVID-19.

Molnupiravir has been shown to be active in several models of SARS-CoV-2, including for prophylaxis, treatment and prevention of transmission, as well as SARS-CoV-1 and MERS. EIDD-2801 was invented at Drug Innovations at Emory (DRIVE), LLC, a not-for-profit biotechnology company wholly owned by Emory University.

Commenting on the partnership, Umang Vohra, MD and Global CEO, Cipla Limited, said, "We are pleased to partner with MSD for this cause and take this treatment to patients across countries. In keeping with our purpose of Caring for Life, this collaboration will expand patient access to quality treatment for COVID-19."