

“Early diagnosis through advanced screening tech, coupled with heightened awareness is crucial”

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The oncology market in India is steadily growing, driven by an increasing cancer incidence and a strong demand for advanced treatments. However, there remains substantial untapped potential, primarily in improving access to cutting-edge therapies and expanding reach to underserved regions. Glenmark Pharma, with its patient-centric approach and innovative solutions, has been steadily increasing its market share by introducing high-quality and affordable cancer drugs. Alok Malik, President & Business Head - India Formulations, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd, in an exclusive interview with BioSpectrum, spoke at length about the company’s mission to enhance access to high-quality cancer care in India and the untapped market potential, new launches and the plans ahead.

What are Glenmark’s latest launches in oncology?

Chemotherapy, a widely used cancer treatment, often results in distressing side effects such as nausea and vomiting. In an exclusive collaboration with Helsinn, a Swiss biopharma Group Company, we are pioneering the introduction of the innovative I.V. injection formulation, AKYNZEO IV, in India. This ground-breaking treatment is designed to alleviate chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV) and is the first of its kind in the country. Additionally, we have introduced Candipoz GR 300 for prophylaxis against invasive fungal infections in the region, further underlining our commitment to advancing treatment standards. In continuation of our supportive care portfolio expansion strategy, we have introduced the Eltrog brand (Eltrombopag tablets) used for thrombocytopenia and severe aplastic anaemia. Globally, we are developing and working towards commercialising our innovative oncology products.

With cancer cases rising in India, how do you see the drug market growing?

With the increasing incidence of cancer cases in India, the industry is witnessing growth driven by several factors. Early diagnosis through advanced screening and diagnostic technologies, coupled with heightened awareness, is crucial in ensuring effective treatment. The government has launched several initiatives such as the National Cancer Control Programme and the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke. These programmes are primarily aimed at creating awareness and strengthening the existing infrastructure of cancer treatment. The industry continually advances with personalised medicine, immunotherapies, and innovative drugs. Collaborative efforts are key in making these treatments more accessible and affordable to a broader segment of the population. Additionally, holistic cancer care, including supportive measures and preventive strategies, plays a vital role in addressing the growing cancer burden. Glenmark, as a key player, remains committed to pioneering innovative oncology solutions and contributing to the evolving landscape of cancer care in India.

The drugs and treatment costs for cancer take a toll. How does your patient support programme help such patients?

Our Oncology Patient Support Programme is designed to address the multifaceted challenges patients encounter when seeking cancer treatment. This initiative, operating through a unified platform, replicates the patient's journey and empowers them to overcome access barriers, including issues related to accessibility, awareness, and treatment adherence. Each year, over 3,000 patients derive substantial benefits from our Programme called Enable.

What are the company's plans for oncology? Are any M&As or launches planned this year?

Glenmark's focus on oncology remains strong, with ongoing efforts to introduce new treatments for prostate, breast, and renal cancers. Additionally, we are committed to addressing chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV) through innovative therapies, with an emphasis on first-in-market releases. Within our oncology discovery pipeline, we are working on GRC 54276, an orally administered Hematopoietic Progenitor Kinase 1 (HPK1) Inhibitor for solid tumor treatment. The acceptance of our Investigational New Drug (IND) application for GRC 54276 by the U.S. FDA earlier in the year 2023 is a significant step towards conducting a Phase 1/2 clinical study, marking a positive development in cancer care. We are also evaluating other novel therapies to be introduced in India through partnerships.

Bhagwati Prasad