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Smaller pharma companies join race in anti-obesity drug market ahead of branded generic wave: Sheetal Sapale

09 March 2026 | News

Expected patent expiry of key obesity drugs is opening a major commercial opportunity



The anti-obesity drug market is gearing up for intense competition as several smaller pharmaceutical companies prepare to enter the segment alongside large and mid-sized players, aiming to capitalise on the upcoming wave of branded generics. The expected patent expiry of key obesity drugs is opening a major commercial opportunity, prompting many companies to launch multiple brands across different divisions to strengthen their market presence.

According to insights from Pharmarack, while numerous companies typically enter the market following a patent loss, the bulk of the commercial opportunity is usually captured by just three to four leading players.

“The anti-obesity segment is attracting significant interest across the pharmaceutical industry. While many companies—including smaller players—are entering the space with branded generics, historically only a handful of leading companies manage to capture the majority of the market following patent expiries,” said Sheetal Sapale, Vice President – Commercial at Pharmarack Technologies.

Sheetal noted that despite the influx of branded generics, innovator drugs are expected to retain a stable share of the market. Patients already undergoing treatment with innovator therapies are unlikely to switch, as they typically belong to a higher-affordability segment. In addition, many speciality and super-speciality doctors may continue to prefer innovator products due to the strong clinical evidence supporting their efficacy and safety.

Innovator anti-obesity therapies are biologics designed to closely mimic natural body hormones and enzymes, supported by years of research and clinical trials. Branded generics, on the other hand, are synthetic versions that replicate the same mechanism of action but may not match innovators across all aspects such as efficacy, tolerability and safety profile.

As competition intensifies and more companies enter the segment, Sheetal emphasise that ensuring appropriate patient selection, careful therapy monitoring and adherence to lifestyle modifications will be critical for achieving sustainable treatment outcomes in the rapidly expanding anti-obesity drug market.