

COPD treatment pipeline lacks robust innovation?

02 February 2016 | Features | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Despite an influx of new therapies over recent years, the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) treatment market has a number of unmet needs, and the innovation in its product development pipeline is lagging in comparison to other indications, says business intelligence provider GBI Research.

According to the company's latest report, while currently-available drugs aim to manage the symptoms associated with COPD by reducing the frequency and severity of exacerbations and improving lung function, none have been shown to modify long-term disease progression.

Mr Yasser Mushtaq, Senior Analyst for GBI Research, states that in addition to the need for disease-modifying drugs, much of the unmet need associated with COPD has been linked to poor adherence to medication.

Mr Mushtaq says: "Tedious drug delivery processes and the need for frequent daily doses ultimately lead to poor compliance and management of COPD symptoms. As a consequence, drug development programs are focusing on long-acting medication.

"There is also a need for alternative anti-inflammatory agents. Traditionally reliant on Inhaled Corticosteroids (ICS), analysis of the COPD product development pipeline has confirmed greater interest into novel anti-inflammatory agents."

The analyst adds that beyond ICS therapy, the current market offers very limited anti-inflammatory treatment, which is a notable unmet need in COPD.

GBI Research's report also states that first-in-class product development in COPD treatment constitutes only 16.5% of the pipeline, which is relatively small compared to other respiratory indications.

For example, asthma therapeutics exhibit greater innovation, with first-in-class products making up 23% of the pipeline.

Mr Mushtaq continues: "There are suggestions that such innovation is filtering through into the COPD therapeutics pipeline, as asthma and COPD share mechanisms of pathophysiology, making it likely that products will be applicable to both diseases.

"In this way, innovations in the asthma treatment pipeline will significantly aid that of COPD. However, there is no clear indication that disease-modifying drugs will be released onto the COPD market any time soon, making it an attractive proposition for major pharma players."