

## Reliance arm to launch 4 biotech biosimilars by next year

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**R**eliance Life Sciences, which launched three biosimilars, or reverse-engineered versions of biotech drugs last year, will launch four more such drugs by next year.

Clinical studies are on for these drugs, which belong to the oncology and cardiology segment. "We are working on biosimilar products which most other competitors are not following," said KV Subramaniam, president, Reliance Life Science.

The company launched Re-liFeron (interferon alpha), Re-liPoietin (erythropoietin) and ReliGrast (granulocyte colony stimulating factor) last year. At present, final stage limited Phase III human clinical trials are on in Europe for GCSF (Granulocyte Colony Stimulating Factor), used to stimulate production of white blood cells and used as an adjunct treatment with chemotherapy for cancer patients. A second GCSF product is also under development and will reach markets by 2010. Both these products were added by Reliance Life Sciences through the acquisition of the UK-based drug discovery company, GeneMedix, in 2007.

Off-patent biotech drugs are an emerging business opportunity worldwide. Europe and the US are estimated to have a market size of above \$16 billion by 2012 for biosimilars. Indian companies Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Wockhardt, Intas Biopharmaceuticals and Biocon are working on several biosimilar drugs.

Reliance Life Sciences currently exports its products to South Asia, South East Asia and Latin American countries. Going forward, the company will sell its products in the US and Europe once a regulatory mechanism evolves for sale of biosimilars, according to Subramaniam.

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