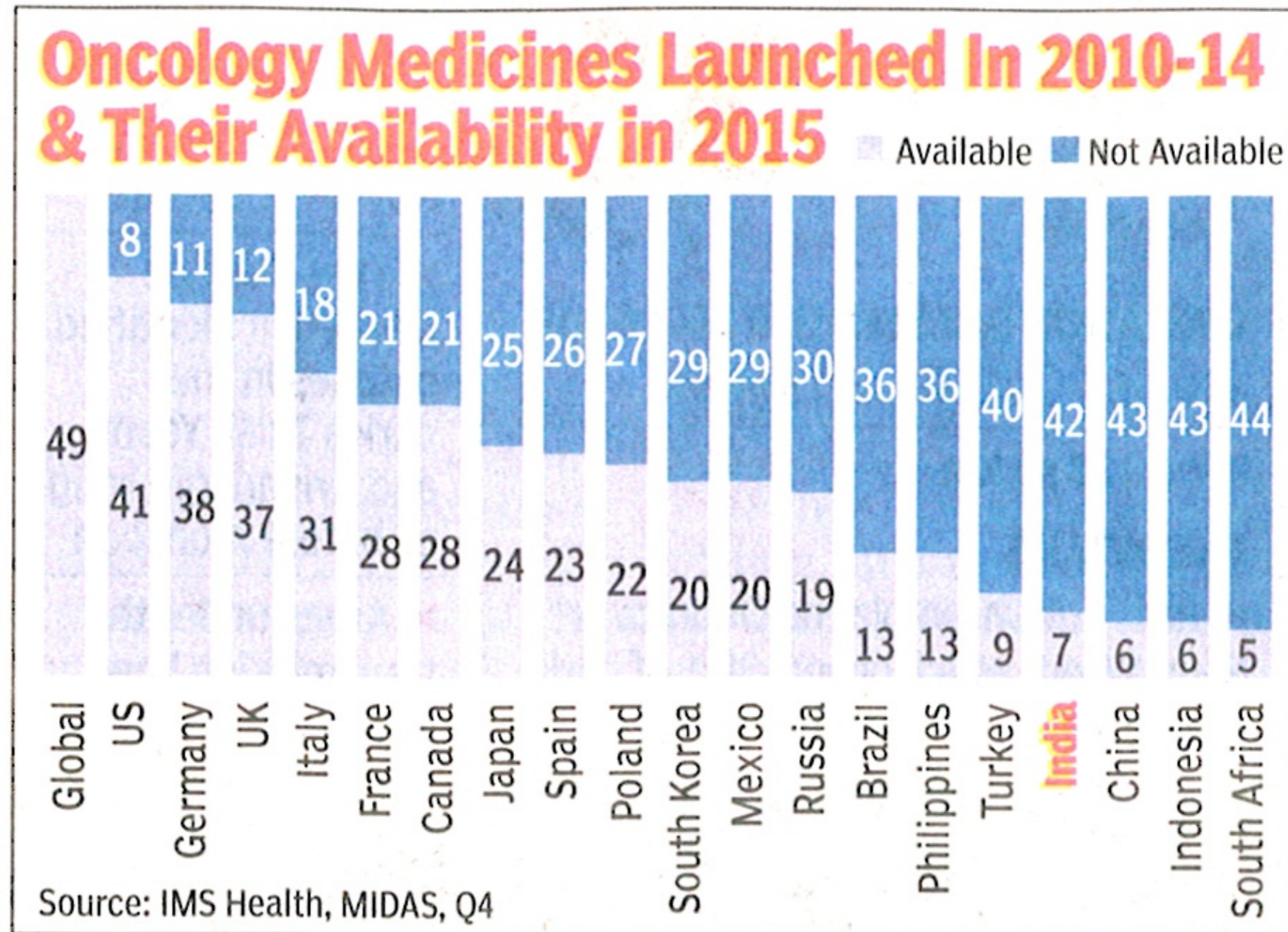


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 Title : India got only 7 of 50 global cancer drugs in 5 years  
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 Cancer mortality rates higher in developing world

# India got only 7 of 50 global cancer drugs in 5 years



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Cancer drugs, being the top focus for research and development, corner the lion's share of medicines launched globally, yet only a handful make it to developing countries like India. Only seven oncology drugs were introduced in India over five years (2010-2014), when nearly 50 breakthrough therapies were rolled out globally.

The disparity in availability of oncology therapies becomes even more stark over a 10-year period (2006-2016), with not even one-third of the 270-odd onco-molecules being

available in India, a country with over 10 million cancer patients, data culled by TOI from QuintilesIMS, a technology-driven healthcare service provider shows.

So, even as the oncology landscape is rapidly evolving with scientific advances in treatment options, many patients are being left untreated, with most health systems struggling to adapt to the change. In India, oncology treatment typically run into lakhs, particularly with certain lung, prostate and breast cancer drugs priced over a lakh per dose in certain cases.

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## Cancer mortality rates higher in developing world

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Regulatory systems, diagnostics, treatment infrastructure, and financing mechanisms need to crank up to meet the needs of patients.

"Companies do realise there is a need to be fully able to access medicines being discovered and launched in other parts of the world. But non-availability of new drugs is not the only barrier. There are broader issues, such as cancer care diagnosis and lack of infrastructure, that need to be resolved. We have only 2,000 oncologists in India, whereas the number of cancer patients are over 10 million. India needs strong public and private funding to support the cancer care system, with prevention and diagnosis being two important aspects that need to be promoted," says Amit Mookim, MD, South Asia QuintilesIMS.

Due to disparities in the quality of cancer care globally, less developed regions have a higher cancer mortality rate of 66%, compared to 48% in more developed regions. In India too, deaths due to cancer are projected to increase by 20% to over 8.8 lakh in the next four years, according to the cancer registry maintained by Indian Council of Medical Research

Says Sujay Shetty, leader, pharmaceuticals, at PwC India and Asia Pacific: "Access is a

### TOO MUCH TO BEAR: PRICES OF CANCER TREATMENT DRUGS IN INDIA

MOLECULE	MRP (in ₹Lakh)	INDICATION	TREATMENT COURSE
Pertuzumab (420mg vial)	2.5	Her 2+ metastatic breast cancer	6 cycles
Nivolumab (100mg vial)	1.5	Non-small cell lung cancer	6 cycles
Ado-Trastuzumab (160mg vial)	2.5	Her 2+ metastatic breast cancer	10 cycles
Enzalutamide (40mg/120 cap)	3.4	Metastatic prostate cancer	Until disease progresses
Ceritinib (150mg cap/150 cap)	1.2	Non-small cell lung cancer	6 cycles

huge challenge since most oncology medicines are exorbitantly priced, and a majority of healthcare spends is out-of-pocket in India. MNCs have introduced a tiered pricing structure, or have patient assistance programmes, while some non-banking finance companies are providing loans for therapy, to overcome the problem".

However, K V Subramaniam, president and CEO of Reliance Life Sciences, which offers mainly biosimilars for oncology, rubbishes the tiered pricing structure. "In reality, what is offered by certain companies is free supplies for the last one or two cycles of chemotherapy. The companies concerned have made their money in the other cycles of chemotherapy for which the patient has bought the drug."

Certain companies provide free doses through select doctors, but those are just a drop in the ocean. Average costs for administering cancer drugs are typically at least twice as much when treatment is received in hospital outpatient settings rather than in physician offices. This results in higher medical bills, mostly paid out of pocket by patients, particularly in India.

Health insurance can play a key role, but presently, only one-fifth of Indians have some cover. Most health insurance products do not cover critical illnesses such as cancer, and a few come with sub-limits or may not cover the entire cost of treatment. Therefore, one needs a dedicated cancer care product to address end-to-end cancer care treatment cost.