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**Title** : Desi pharma companies top in biosimilars globally

# Desi pharma cos top in biosimilars globally

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**Mumbai:** India is leading the global biosimilar pipeline, with the largest number of products launched in the country and emerging economies. Biosimilars, developed by innovators, are approved versions of biopharmaceuticals — complex medicines manufactured using live organisms, as against conventional drugs that are based on chemical composition.

At present, domestic companies are marketing their products only in emerging markets, but the largest and most lucrative market for all pharmaceuticals — the US — is the next stop. The development not only indicates that Indian pharma companies are moving up the value chain af-

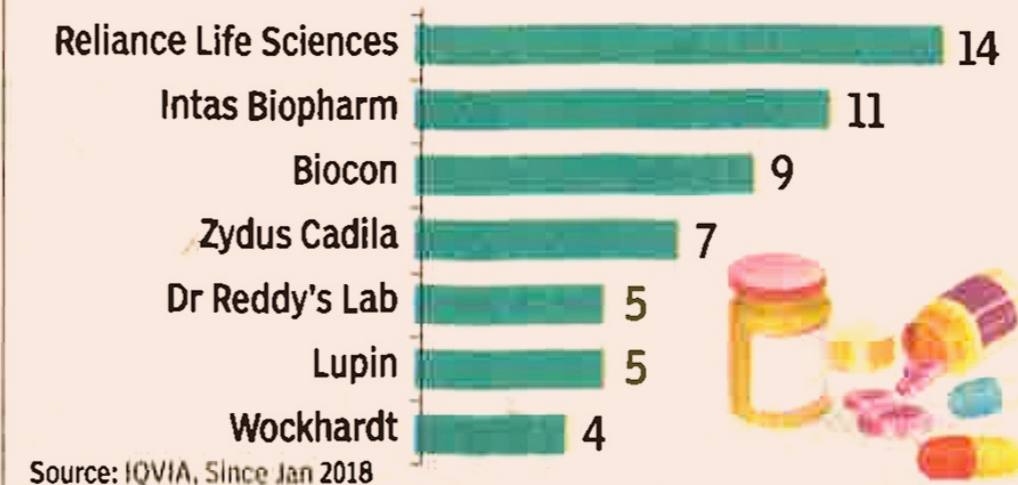
ter decades of making copycat medicines, it has, more importantly, led to treatment costs getting slashed by 20-40% in chronic and life-threatening illnesses, like rheumatoid arthritis and cancers.

“Reliance Life Sciences has pursued a strategy of developing, in an integrated manner, a wide array of biosimilars at competitive prices to meet patient needs on a global basis. Being recognised as the top biosimilar player globally, in terms of number of products, is one testimony of this strategy in practice,” says company president and CEO K V S Subramaniam.

Significantly, the entry of biosimilars has helped bring down prices for patients. To illustrate, net prices to innovators have come down 18% from

## NEXT STOP: US MARKET

Number of biosimilars by Indian cos in the global pipeline



Rs 22,000 for bevacizumab (a 100mg vial), 45% to Rs 3,000 for interferon beta (30-microgram pre-filled syringe), and 14% to Rs 19,000 for rituximab (500mg vial). Indian companies are exporting biosimilars to developing countries, primarily South Asia, Southeast Asia, Afri-

ca and Latin America.

Intas VC and MD Binish Chudgar said, “The estimate of the global biosimilar market is \$9.5-13 billion by 2022, despite the fact that over \$90 billion worth of biotech-based medicines are expected to go off-patent in the next few years.

Much of the activity in biosimilars is taking place in Europe, while the US, which is the largest pharmaceutical market in the world by a wide margin, has not really opened up to these products. On the domestic front, with a very supportive regulatory authority, biotechnological medicines are set to become an important part of future healthcare landscape.”

PwC India leader (pharmaceutical & life sciences) Sujay Shetty said, “There are emerging signs that partnerships (Biocon with Mylan) are beginning to bear fruit. However, their success in regulated markets will depend on skills of each JV partner. India can dominate rest of world. Going forward, there could be competition from Korean and Chinese companies in the emerging markets.”