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Sandoz announces global deal to market natalizumab

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Worldwide agreement with Polpharma gives Sandoz commercialization rights to proposed biosimilar natalizumab for relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS)

Sandoz, a Novartis division and a global leader in biosimilars, has entered into a global commercialization agreement for a proposed natalizumab biosimilar. The medicine is in Phase III clinical development for the treatment of relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS).

Under the agreement, Polpharma Biologics will maintain responsibilities for development, manufacturing and supply of proposed biosimilar natalizumab. Sandoz will commercialize and distribute the medicine in all markets upon approval, through an exclusive global license. Other specific terms of the agreement are confidential. Polpharma Biologics is a European biopharmaceutical company with a fully integrated R&D and manufacturing footprint.

Reference medicine natalizumab is a disease-modifying therapy (DMT) that was approved for use over 10 years ago, offering patients a valuable therapeutic option for treating RRMS.

In addition to the personal burden of MS for patients and families, affordability is a significant challenge for MS medicines globally. A recent report highlighted affordability as the most common challenge affecting access to MS therapy in 46% of the 90 countries included[1]. Elsewhere it has been highlighted that providing access to DMTs for MS represents a considerable challenge for healthcare systems[3].

Sandoz continues to expand the biosimilars marketplace and is committed to help millions of patients access biologic medicines sustainably and affordably. The addition of proposed biosimilar natalizumab expands the Novartis/Sandoz portfolio across small molecules, complex generics, biosimilars, and innovator medicines enabling broad patient access to patented and off-patent medicines. In addition to entering complex and underserved areas such as MS, Sandoz is already helping patients in the areas of immunology, oncology and endocrinology. The division has a leading global portfolio with eight marketed biosimilars and a further 10+ in development.