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India launches first indigenous antibiotic Nafithromycin to combat drug resistance

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In a ground breaking step for India's biotechnology sector, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh formally launched the first indigenous antibiotic Nafithromycin for drug resistant infections.

The antibiotic Nafithromycin has been developed with the support of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a unit of the Department of Biotechnology and has been brought to market under the trade name Miqnaf by pharma company Wockardt. It is the country's first indigenously developed antibiotic aimed at tackling Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

Dr Jitendra Singh described the three-day treatment regimen of Nafithromycin as a game-changer in addressing drug-resistant pneumonia, a condition responsible for over two million deaths globally each year. India, which bears 23% of the world's community pneumonia burden, faces challenges with existing treatments, including widespread resistance to drugs like azithromycin.

The new antibiotic, developed by Wockhardt with support from the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), is ten times more effective than current options and offers a safer, faster, and more tolerable solution for patients.

Nafithromycin's efficacy stands out as it targets both typical and atypical pathogens, offering a potent solution where no new antibiotic in this class has been developed worldwide for over three decades. Remarkably, it is ten times more effective than azithromycin and achieves comparable outcomes with just a three-day regimen, as validated by clinical trials.

The development of Nafithromycin represents 14 years of dedicated research and an investment of ?500 crores, with clinical trials spanning the US, Europe, and India. Supported by BIRAC under its Biotechnology Industry Partnership Program (BIPP), the initiative showcases the power of public-private collaboration in advancing healthcare innovation. Dr Jitendra Singh highlighted that the drug is now awaiting final approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for manufacturing and public use, marking a major leap forward in India's fight against AMR.