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The European Commission has approved Roche's RoActemra (tocilizumab) for use in patients with severe, active, and progressive rheumatoid arthritis (RA). It is to be used in patients, who have previously not been treated with methotrexate (MTX).

"RoActemra is an effective biologic treatment for patients with early RA that may change the course of the disease and reduce the likelihood of disability," said Ms Sandra Horning, head of global product development and chief medical officer, Roche. She added, "As the first IL-6 receptor antagonist approved for early RA, RoActemra addresses the need for alternative treatment options to anti-tumor-necrosis-factor (anti-TNF) therapies in this debilitating condition."

RoActemra is the first interleukin-6 (IL-6) receptor antagonist to be approved in Europe.