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Oncology market growing at 20% in APAC region

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The oncology market in Asia Pacific clocked $4.5 billion (about Rs 21,593 crore) in 2008 growing close to 20 percent over 2007. According to market tracker IMS MIDAS, the market has been growing in double digit with China leading with $1.89 billion (about Rs 9,069 crore) in 2008 followed by Australia with $921 million (about Rs 4,419 crore), Korea with $613 million (about Rs 2,941 crore), Taiwan with $407 million (about Rs 1,952 crore) and Thailand with $107 million (about Rs 513 crore).
Though the oncology market in Bangladesh is just over million dollars, it has a lot of potential for drug companies as it has registered a highest growth rate in 2008 with over 70 percent against the previous year's growth rate of 39 percent. The other fast growing markets in the region in 2008 include China with over 36 percent, India with 24 percent, Hong Kong 23 percent. Taiwan and the Philippines too offer a lot of market opportunities as these are growing at close to 20 percent in 2008. South Korea, the only country listed among the top five countries related to oncology market has posted a negative growth of six percent in 2008. While in 2007, the market in Korea witnessed a growth of over 24 percent with market size of $654 million (Rs 3,138 crore).
Like China, India too offers huge opportunities for companies to offer anti-cancer drugs because of increase in mortality rate due to cancer. In 2007, the oncology market size registered close to 70 percent growth with a market size of $54 million (Rs 259 crore). Though the market witnessed a growth in 2008 in India but figures dropped to 25 percent with market size of $67

million (about Rs 321 crore).
Except Bangladesh, China and Taiwan, all other countries in the region witnessed a drastic drop in the growth of the market in 2008 as compared to previous year. Malaysia witnessed a growth rate of just over eight percent in 2008 as compared to the growth rate of 53 percent registered in 2007. Similarly, the market in New Zealand recorded a growth of just five percent in 2008 as against the previous year's growth of 25 percent. Even Indonesia witnessed same trend.
One of the key reasons for the drop in the growth rate of the market in most of the countries in the region can be attributed to global economic recession. For people living with cancer, the therapeutic treatment is beyond their reach during the current economic scenario.
Barring India, in all other countries innovative drug companies such as AstraZeneca, Novartis, Roche and Sanofi-Aventis are leading the market with other players such as Schering Plough, Baxter, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Pfizer and Amgen. In India, companies such as Fresenius Kabi Oncology (formerly Dabur Pharma), Natco Pharma, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's Labs and Panacea Biotec are leading the oncology market with each having a share of less than $10 million (about Rs 47 crore).

India
According to reports, the oncology market in India is about $186 million (Rs 892 crore), and is expected to reach $693 million (about Rs 3,325 crore) by 2012, growing with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of nearly 30 percent.
Dr Reddy's Laboratories has identified oncology as a major focus area for drug development. Shantha Biotech has targeted oncology as its primary area of interest for conducting R&D activities. Dabur Pharma is yet another company focusing on cancer research and anti-cancer products. The other companies active in oncology research include Intas Biopharmaceuticals, Glenmark, Biocon, Zenotech, Ranbaxy and Cipla.
With an eye on global markets, Zydus Cadila has set up a new facility for manufacturing oncology products as well as enhancing its R&D capabilities in 2005 as it identified oncology as its long-term focus area.
In November 2007, Merck has turned to Nicholas Piramal India Limited (NPIL), now called as Piramal Healthcare, for its latest research collaboration, as the preclinical offshoring trend persists. NPIL will assist Merck in creating new drugs for two of the pharma giant's chosen oncology targets, in a deal worth up to $175 million (Rs 839 crore) per target in milestone payments, as well as royalties on any product sales.
Natco Pharma, a manufacturer of branded and generic dosage products, has signed an agreement with Dr Reddy's Laboratories for the development, manufacture and supply of a basket of value added generic oncology drugs early this April.
High number of unmet needs and an ever-increasing prevalence of cancer have created a gold rush among drug companies to enter the cancer market. And every company is making efforts to launch its drug at the earliest. To meet that end, they are opting for different approaches such as partnership and tie-ups. Though launching a cancer drug successfully is a high risk proposition, but if a company is able to do it, then on the horizon are high commercial gains.

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