

Collaboration between Merck and InnoCore could improve biologic drug delivery

Following today's (Friday 3 August) announcement of Merck and InnoCore's collaboration, Rahael Maladwala, Pharma Analyst at GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, offers his view on what this might mean for biologic drug delivery:

One of the biggest environmental unmet needs in the pharmaceutical market is a lack of compliance. Whether this is due to invasive drug delivery, adverse events, or a complicated dosing regime, many patients that start a biologic treatment do not finish the course.

Often biologic can only be delivered at a healthcare provider on a weekly or monthly basis, which may be difficult for some patients, particularly in chronic indications that cause psychosis and hallucinations, such as schizophrenia, and those that impact movement, such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Indeed it was estimated that the cost of non-compliance in the US cost the economy somewhere between \$100bn and \$290bn per year, according to the US National Library of Medicine. The collaboration between Merck and InnoCore looks at improving the drug delivery of injectable drugs using InnoCore's SynBiosys technology, which allow sustained release of large peptides in patients.

Sustained release drugs for small molecule drugs are common place in the pharmaceutical market; however, this type of technology has not been seen before for biologic molecules and would increase compliance by reducing the dosing frequency.

Merck is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world and has a strong pipeline portfolio, with several biologic drugs targeting various different therapy areas,

including oncology, cardiovascular, and infectious diseases. If the company can successfully utilize this drug delivery system in the future, their drugs would be at a significant advantage to others on the market and would help fasten their uptake.

Moving forward, it is likely that we see other pharmaceutical companies look to collaborate with companies such as InnoCore, to help address environmental unmet needs such as compliance, and with increased compliance comes fewer patient complications, which saves physician time and reduces the cost on the healthcare provider.”