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Sandoz, ECS to produce biosimilar for blood cancer medication



Sandoz Egypt announced that it has partnered with the Egyptian Cancer Society (ECS) to launch rituximab biosimilar, a monoclonal antibody used in the treatment of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL).

The partnership is an important step in expanding access to global standard-care treatment for two of the most prevalent types of blood cancer. The newly approved antibody addresses vital patient needs, while simultaneously supporting the sustainability of the Egyptian health-care system.

A virtual scientific symposium will be held on 23 October to announce the availability of rituximab in Egypt.

"While NHL ranks 10th for men and 12th for women in terms of cancer incidence worldwide, in Egypt the risk of being diagnosed with the disease is even higher, with NHL represent-

ing the third most common cancer," said Mohamed Abdel Moaty Samra, Head of the Medical Oncology and Hematology Department, at Cairo University's National Cancer Institute (NCI). "This launch is great news for Egyptian patients, making critical treatment more widely available to them."

"Biosimilars are the successors of biologic medicines, known as 'reference drugs', with these therapies known to play a key role in the treatment of several cancers including lymphoma (Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL)," said Hamdy Abdel-Azim, Professor of Clinical Oncology at Cairo University's Faculty of Medicine. "Unfortunately, the high cost of these reference biologicals represents a major challenge to patient access to treatment, a challenge that is encountered even in developed countries."

"The launch of our first rituximab

biosimilar in Egypt is a beacon of hope for many patients and represents a huge milestone for Sandoz. This launch is a testament to our commitment to expanding the availability of life changing and potentially lifesaving medications around the world," said Sameh Elbagoury, Country Head for Sandoz Egypt and Libya.

"Rituximab is listed as one of the World Health Organization (WHO)'s essential biologic medicines for cancer patients and the introduction of the rituximab biosimilar by Sandoz represents a clear added value to the treatment of blood cancers in Egypt. Having demonstrated the same efficacy, safety, and quality in clinical trials as the reference medicine has, rituximab of Sandoz was approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) more than three years ago," said Peter Effat, Medical Head for Sandoz Egypt.