

# Cipla and mAbxience join forces to ensure affordable access to oncology treatment

Cipla Medpro, South Africa's third largest pharmaceutical company in the private sector and the wholly owned subsidiary of Cipla Limited, India ("Cipla"), finalised a partnership agreement with the global biotechnology company mAbxience, to get oncology and respiratory-related biosimilars to South Africa.



Source: [Pexels](#)

These medicine products for the treatment of cancer are on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

The mAbxience partnership will enable Cipla to continue its ethos of ensuring equitable access to affordable, life-saving medication. Most other biosimilar treatments, particularly in oncology, create a high-cost burden on the payer or patient and often are inaccessible to patients in need of this critical treatment.

A biosimilar is a biological product that is highly similar to and has no clinically meaningful differences from an existing approved reference biologic product, and is produced from living cells using biotechnology. Biosimilars, while being more affordable, are developed with equivalent efficacy, safety and quality of the reference biologic.

In 2018, Cipla paved the way for more affordable treatments in the fight against dreaded diseases with the launch of the first biosimilar drug, Filgrastim Teva, for oncology and haematology patients in South Africa. Cipla also recently launched a biosimilar for the treatment of immune-mediated inflammatory disease.

According to the Cancer Alliance report CA03/2021, South Africa faces a crisis in terms of affordable access to medicines, particularly in the treatment of cancer. According to Fatima Hassan of the Health Justice Initiative, “most patients cannot afford the medicines and treatment because they are priced for first-world markets. Some also enjoy extended periods of exclusivity, which means they have little or no competition”.

## **Challenging treatment pricing and accessibility**

Cipla changed the face of the HIV/Aids pandemic during its most severe phase more than 20 years ago, by dramatically slashing the prices of antiretrovirals to less than \$1 a day, in comparison to the prevailing yearly treatment cost of \$12,000 per patient. This revolutionised HIV/Aids from being a perceived death sentence to a disease managed like any other chronic medical condition.

CEO of Cipla South Africa, Paul Miller, said: “Cipla is built on the foundation of ensuring affordable and accessible drugs to patients in need. Cipla has focused on oncology to help make an equally profound difference in patients’ lives. We want people to live a long and healthy life, and quality medication is not just the privilege for a few, but a right for everyone.”

Recently, Cipla also received regulating approval for lenalidomide – a lifesaving drug proven to enhance the immune-system cells that identify and attack cancer cells – a development that addresses the disparity with regards to access to and affordability of this medication.

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