

RPG Life set to roll out renal drug, services

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For those suffering from chronic kidney diseases, it may not be long before they receive mobile-phone alerts regarding their medication or dialysis treatment, as part of a plan from RPG Life Sciences.

The company is set to roll-out its medicinal-grade Ketoanalogue - Alfalog among the doctor community next week, said Mr Ajit Singh Chouhan, Managing Director of RPGLS. And the generic product would be backed by services to support those using these nephrology products, he added.

Ketonalogues help in delaying RRTs (renal replacement therapy - dialysis), among patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD), he said. It is estimated that about 3,500 kidney transplants take place locally in a year.

At present, the product is imported and sold in India by the innovator, Fresenius Kabi, the multinational that bought Dabur Pharma.

RPG's generically similar version of the drug, the first in the country, is highly stable and has an improved absorption in the body, he

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explained. A complex mix of 10 active ingredients, the product has been developed by in-house research, he said, adding that the company was looking to patent the process.

Achieving heat stability is important, as instability increases impurity levels, he explained. And improved dissolution of the drug (absorption by the blood), ensures better bioavailability, optimising the therapeutic effects, he added.

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Making and selling it locally would improve access and availability of the drug, Mr Chouhan said unwilling to disclose its price. The innovator's product is sold to doctors at about Rs 35 a tablet, an industry representative said.

The cost to the patient increases depending on how many such tablets she/he may require a day, and that could vary from two to 10 depending on the seriousness of the disease, Mr Chouhan explained.

Strong in the nephrology products segment, RPG recently re-aligned its portfolio to look at the dialysis market.

The company sells four immunosuppressant brands - Azoran (Azathioprine), Arpimune ME (Cyclosporine), Mofetyl/S (Mycophenolate Mofetil and Mycophenolate Sodium) and Imunotac (Tacrolimus) in India and the emerging markets.

To consolidate the therapy line, it has also launched RPO- erythropoietin (used to stimulate red blood cell production), Azofer - Iron Sucrose and Statkal - calcium polystyrene, he said. About 20 per cent of its finished drug sales, or about Rs 20 crore, comes from these drugs.

To support its nephrology portfolio, RPG has appointed an agency to build networks between doctors and patients. The next level would be to have a database and system in place to send alerts to CKD patients, he added, possibly in about six months.