

GC pharma announces approval for Lantus biosimilar in Korea

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Korea's GC Pharma announced that it has attained regulatory approval to sell a copy version of Sanofi's blockbuster insulin Lantus- Glarzia Prefilled Pen in Korea.

This product is the second Lantus biosimilar after Boehringer Ingelheim's Basaglar. The company plans to launch Glarzia Prefilled Pen, a Lantus biosimilar developed by Indian drug maker Biocon, in the third quarter this year, an official said on March 8.

Under a license deal in 2016, GC Pharma holds exclusive sales marketing rights for Glarzia in Korea. The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety gave the sales license to GC Pharma for Glarzia Prefilled Pen, which will be an import version of Lantus biosimilar by India's Biocon.

Sanofi's Lantus is a blockbuster antidiabetic injection in the insulin market, selling more than 30 billion won (\$282 million) in 2017, according to UBIST data.

Glarzia will now compete against Basaglar, another long-acting insulin biosimilar from Eli Lilly and Boehringer Ingelheim that's sold by Eli Lilly. Basaglar was launched last April at a 14 percent discount of the original drug. It recorded some 300 million won (US\$282,000) in sales last year, read reports.

To fend off the growing biosimilar competition, Sanofi launched Toujeo, its own longer-acting basal insulin. Lantus currently dominates the Korean insulin injection market, which is estimated to be worth around 40 billion won.