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Report: Global diabetes pipeline has 221 drugs

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Mumbai: A report released by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) revealed that biopharmaceutical research companies are currently developing 221 innovative new medicines to help nearly 347 million patients affected by diabetes, including India which is known as the diabetes capital of the world. Since 1990, six new classes of diabetes type 2 medicines have been approved by FDA, giving patients and providers powerful new tools to treat the condition.

These medicines in development are all in either clinical trials or under review by the US FDA, including 32 for type 1 diabetes, 130 for type 2 and 64 for diabetes-related conditions. Examples of some of the new cutting-edge approaches being used to fight diabetes, include a once-daily medicine that selectively inhibits the protein associated with glucose metabolism, a medicine designed to inhibit an enzyme linked to diabetic neuropathy and a medicine to treat type 2 diabetes that may allow for once-weekly dosing amongothers.

"There are various challenges in managing diabetics in India be it low awareness of the disease or lack of access to new drugs and health facilities. Measures to address these and development of new medicine, in a safe and cost effective manner would be welcome," said Dr Archana Juneja, endocrinologist, Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai.

India alone has 61.3 million people living with diabetes, second to China, according to International Diabetes Federation (IDF). The prevalence is expected to rise sharply for a variety of reasons, including an aging population more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, and longer lifespan among diabetes patients. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to severe health problems and complications, such as heart disease, stroke, vision loss and amputation.

Mr John J Castellani, CEO and president, PhRMA, said that, "Many of the human and economic costs associated with diabetes can be avoided, making improvement of patient adherence one of the best opportunities to get better results and greater value from our health care system. This is by no means an easy task, but stakeholders throughout the health care system, including biopharmaceutical research companies, must work together to tackle this shared objective."