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Astellas to axe 300 jobs in home country in FY14

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Singapore: Japanese pharmaceutical major Astellas Pharma has announced that it would cut down its group workforce in home country by roughly 4 percent. Over 300 employees would be sent home in the year ending March 2015.

Citing rising drug development costs, the company said that it aims to slim down operations to enhance competitiveness. As part of this plan, the Japanese drug maker will offer early retirement to domestic staffers, overhauling marketing and other back-office divisions.

In 2007, the firm axed 440 jobs and this is the first time since then that the company has resorted to personnel cuts. Through this, it now plans to streamline the current 8,000 strong workforce.

The firm reported that the April-September group net profit fell 16 percent on the year to 48.1 billion yen, while sales climbed 17 percent to 556.7 billion yen. "Domestic sales of prescription drugs dipped 2 percent, but the Xtandi prostate cancer drug and the Vesicare overactive-bladder treatment are selling briskly abroad. Sales in the Americas jumped 50 percent, while those in Europe grew 30 percent. Pretax profit slid 8 percent to 83 billion yen, reflecting a 45.9 billion yen year-on-year rise in sales and administrative costs along with an 18.6 billion yen increase in R&D expenses," the statement explained.