

Japan driving innovation in drug delivery devices

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Guest Column
Mr Steven Kaufman, marketing director, SHL Group, Taiwan, has been playing a leading role in expanding the market of auto-injectors from Taiwan to European nations.

Within the Asia-Pacific region, Japan has maintained its leadership

role as the largest pharmaceutical market, second only to the US in the world. With a growing elderly population and increased economic pressure on its healthcare system, Japan may be ideally positioned to further support patients by utilizing specialty self-administration devices such as pen injectors and auto injectors. As a result, aside from researching and developing new drugs to support this generation, many leading Japanese pharmaceutical companies have also been working with device manufacturers to develop different drug delivery device options.

Such devices can not only enhance patient compliance, but can also help reduce the burden on healthcare professionals. An example of such a device is the auto injector, which allows patients to easily self-administer biologic therapies safely at home instead of having to make frequent visits to the hospital. Auto injectors have been used for several years to safely deliver biologics for therapeutic treatments such as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and hepatitis C. This list continues to grow as more biologics are introduced and appropriate delivery devices are needed.

SHL is also looking to Japan as a growing market for auto injectors driven by the steady increase of launched biologics. SHL now works with a number of Japan's leading pharmaceutical companies to develop auto injectors and pen injectors that are suitable for the Japanese market. Japan is a unique market which has a strict regulatory environment that plays a key role when developing and launching a combination product (drug and device) like the auto injector. To ensure one has to stay tuned with the key trends of the Japanese pharmaceutical market. SHL is actively engaging Japanese pharmaceutical professionals whenever possible.