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Sanofi to launch 20 new drugs in Japan by 2020

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Singapore: If reports are to be believed French drug giant Sanofi is all set to launch 20 new drugs in Japan by 2020. In a recently held press meet the company's CEO Mr Jacques Nathan said that among these new drugs, which include existing drugs for new indications, "a significant amount will be biologics."

With drop in sales last year, Sanofi is looking for newer measures to beef up its business in Japan. Sanofi's sales dropped by 11 percent year-on-year to 261.1 billion yen ($2.3 billion) in 2015. In Japan, Sanofi is eager to introduce new drugs as generics continue to eat its profits. Sanofi's widely prescribed antiplatelet drug Plavix (clopidogrel), for example, is challenged by the generic version from Tanabe and Sawai.

Six drugs, including three monoclonal antibodies, are expected to be the driving force for the company's future sales in Japan. They are cholesterol-lowerer Praluent (alirocumab) launched in September; the type2 diabetes treatment insulin Lantus XR (insulin glargine [rDNA origin] injection, known as Toujeo in the USA and European Union, launched in September 2015 ; the rheumatoid arthritis treatment sarilumab, approval of which has been delayed in the USA by the Food and Drug Administration, and is waiting for its new drug application approval from Japan's pharmaceutical and medical devices agency (PMDA); Mozobil (plerixafor), the autologous transplant, received a NDA approval on November 11; Japan Penta, a 5-in-1 vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and hib disease, which is in Phase III trials; and dupilumab for atopic dermatitis, also in Phase III studies.