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PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In many developing countries there is lack of locally produced essential medicines for diseases that affect the population. These countries generally don't have well established pharmaceutical manufacturing capacities, and usually depend on medicines developed and produced in other countries to meet local needs. Till now drug development and production are mainly developed world business, primarily for diseases and conditions prevalent in these countries. Pharmaceutical companies in these countries are profit oriented and are not willing to engage into R&D solely for developing countries which have small drug markets (Figure 1). Nonetheless, few developing countries are good sources of cheap pharmaceuticals (generics) to other poor countries. However, after the introduction of Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on pharmaceuticals, developing countries will not be able to produce cheap generics as before. But still among many options, local production is seen the most appropriate to improve access to medicines. It is the lack of infrastructure for industry, risky nature of drug R&D, weak national drug regulatory systems, limited financial resources and small consumer markets are the main obstacles that hinder the establishment of local production of pharmaceuticals in many developing countries. The review article explores different aspects of pharmaceutical production in developing countries and the role of different local actors and factors influencing this industry. The effect of TRIPS agreement and main challenges facing drug manufacturing in the developing world are also discussed.

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