Eli Lilly to launch its obesity drug at competitive price in India in 2025

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US pharma giant Eli Lilly which plans to bring its obesity and diabetes drug Tirzepatide (or Mounjaro) to India next year, says it will price it “competitive and appropriate”.

A company spokesperson told *Business Standard* that they have received the marketing authorisation from relevant authorities for both Type 2 diabetes and obesity indications.

“We aim to launch Tirzepatide in India by 2025, after obtaining other pending necessary regulatory approvals,” the spokesperson said.

On the pricing front, the spokesperson said: “While we have not finalized the pricing of Tirzepatide for India yet, Lilly is committed to ensuring that tirzepatide remains accessible to patients who need it. Our pricing strategy for tirzepatide in India will be competitive and appropriate, reflecting the efficacy of the medicine and the significant value it brings in reducing the overall health and economic burden of type 2 diabetes and obesity.”

Diabetes and obesity are growing health concerns in India, with significant implications for both individual well-being and the healthcare system.

India is witnessing a rapid surge in diabetes cases.
According to a report by diagnostic service provider Thyrocare, 49.43 per cent of the tested population in India exhibited abnormal blood glucose levels, with 27.18 per cent identified as diabetic and 22.25 per cent as pre-diabetic.

The study, which analysed HbA1c (glycated haemoglobin) test results from 1.96 million adults undergoing routine health check-ups in 2023, follows a similar report published in The Lancet journal, which indicated that a quarter of adults living with diabetes globally in 2022 were in India.
The numbers reflect an increasing prevalence of the disease, as another study by the Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes estimated the prevalence of diabetes and prediabetes in India at 11.4 per cent and 15.3 per cent, respectively.

“The rising prevalence of these chronic diseases underscores the urgent need for effective treatment options that not only manage these conditions but also help prevent related complications. India is a key strategic market for Lilly, and we are deeply committed to bringing innovations to the country to address the unmet needs,” the company spokesperson said.

“However, we recognise that tackling complex conditions like diabetes and obesity requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach. We are committed to collaborating with healthcare providers, policymakers, and public health organisations, and working together to build a robust ecosystem that drives awareness and improves health outcomes,” the person added.
Mounjaro sales in the third quarter of 2024 (Q32024) were over $3.1 bn globally.

“Lilly continues to experience extraordinary demand for our obesity and diabetes medicines, and we are shipping more medicines than ever before to help meet this demand. Our manufacturing organisation continues to execute well on the most ambitious expansion agenda in our company’s long history to help ensure people have access to the medicines they need,” Lilly said, highlighting that they are investing in scaling up production capacities.

“Since 2020, we’ve invested more than $20 billion to build, expand and acquire facilities in the US, Europe and China. These facilities and investments bolster our capacity to support an increased demand for existing and future Lilly products across our diabetes and obesity portfolio,” the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, Lilly's rival Danish firm Novo Nordisk is also working to bring its obesity drug Wegovy (Semglutide) to India soon. According to reports the company may launch Wegovy in 2026.

Novo Nordisk declined to comment.

The diabetes and obesity market with GLP-1 molecules globally is slated to touch $100 bn in the next decade. Biocon's CEO and MD Siddharth Mittal had told Business Standard earlier this year, "Everybody is targeting the GLP-1 opportunity because it is so large. Today, revenue from GLP-1 products is around $35 billion in sales and is expected to cross $100 billion by the end of the decade. There are many more drugs that are in the clinical trial stages globally. The opportunity is very attractive."
Biocon has a broad portfolio of peptides and GLP-1s. This opportunity will open up based on the patent expiration. Biocon has done the filings in various markets which are being reviewed by the regulators.

In India, Cipla and Dr Reddy's Laboratories are also working on this off-patent opportunity, while Glenmark has already launched a generic for Liraglutide (another GLP-1 molecule). Sun Pharma, on the other hand, is chasing a novel molecule in this space which will enter phase 2 trials soon.

News Source:

https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/eli-lilly-to-launch-its-obesity-drug-at-competitive-price-in-india-in-2025-124120900400_1.html