

5 Things to Know About Biosimilars in the New Year



An update on where the field of biosimilars currently stands.

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While the first biosimilar, Zarxio, was approved earlier this year, significant knowledge gaps exist with respect to clinical information on these follow-on biologicals, their interchangeability, and potential impact on the economy. Here is where the field currently stands with respect to biosimilars:

Biosimilars and Their Impact on the Healthcare Economy

With a growing number of expensive biologicals entering the market across a broad range of therapeutic areas, payers and pharmacy benefit managers are exploring ways to curb the growing expense of biologicals, which sometimes cost more than 22 times that of small molecules. With the prediction that 80% of top-selling drugs in 2016 will be biologicals, biosimilars could be a saving grace for the economy, [write experts](#) from CVS Health, although they do not expect the impact to match the generic drug market.

FDA's Suggestions for Naming Biosimilars

The first biosimilar is approved—but how do you name these products to ensure users are aware of the reference drug and interchangeability? With that objective, the FDA [released draft guidance](#) detailing the proposed naming of biosimilars. But the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy has raised objections to the proposed naming system.

Lack of Physician Awareness Could Hurt the Biosimilars Market

While physicians realize the clinical value and the economic impact of biosimilars, a new report suggests they lack the specific detailed information that would help them readily use these products in their practice. The [white paper](#), based on a survey conducted by QuantiaMD, reported that while 94% of responding physicians believed biosimilars would provide value to healthcare, only 17% of those who prescribed biologicals said they were very likely to prescribe biosimilars.

How Much Will Biosimilars Cost?

Novartis has finally marketed its biosimilar to Amgen's Neupogen, but will Zarxio be priced much lower than the reference? And how would this reflect on the biosimilar pipeline that is under development? Read [more](#).

Will Biosimilars Be Cost Effective? Payers Disagree

The introduction of biosimilars into the US market will not have a large impact on treatment costs until the volume of biosimilars for different therapies increases, [predicted](#) Jennifer Malin, MD, medical director for oncology at Anthem. She believes the production cost of these biological products may override any potential cost advantage.

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