

## Contribution of Generic Medicine towards HIV/AIDS treatment

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### EDITORIAL

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WHO defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. The preamble further states that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition”.<sup>1</sup> HIV was first developed in Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of Congo around 1920 when HIV traversed species from chimpanzees to humans. The basic pathology of HIV/AIDS remain obscure or elusive till the 1980s especially of HIV infection and development of AIDS.<sup>2</sup> HIV was growing at a notorious speed and spread out to all five continents infecting between 100,000 and 300,000 people by 1980.<sup>3</sup> HIV remains a distressing plague globally mainly because of very high treatment cost as patented medication and often industry increases the price 5,000 per cent.<sup>4,5</sup>

HIV/AIDS was mostly viewed as a grave health crisis especially in Africa and in 1991 it was prophesied that in “sub-Saharan Africa, by the end of the decade, 9 million people would be infected and 5 million would die – a threefold underestimation”.<sup>6</sup> HIV/AIDS health care costs annually almost US\$20,000 per patient and the US government need to bear the expense. Henceforth, the US federal government spent almost \$15 billion in 2012 on HIV care and medication.

Another research reported that the amount spent was not enough as a lot of patients are always on the waiting list and other comorbidities were not treated.<sup>4</sup> Therefore HIV/AIDS management in developing countries was and currently is, also extremely difficult. International AIDS Conference in 2000 held in Durban, South Africa held regarding HIV at that time only one thousand-people living with HIV in Africa had access to AIDS treatment.<sup>7</sup> At that time antiretroviral (ARV) drugs were principally obtainable only from the patented pharmaceutical companies and with a paralyzing price tag of US\$10,000 to \$15,000 per patient per year.<sup>8</sup> Civil societies, people living with HIV/AIDS, doctors, nurses, ministries of health, developing countries, donor agencies and governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, pharmaceutical companies etc. have reservations about the 13th International AIDS Conference achievement but finally the Durban conference has succeeded in raising the hopes of access to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs for more than five million people in the developing world.<sup>9-11</sup>

Generic manufacture of ARVs in India was possible since the Indian Patents Act did not offer patents on pharmaceutical products up until compulsory by TRIPS to do so in 2005. Generic manufacturers competed with each other to make medicines at prices far lower than the original patent companies.<sup>10,11</sup> Henceforth, India has appeared as a global head of the generic medicine manufacturer, providing 20 per cent of the planet need for generic ARV medicines.<sup>12</sup> It was estimated that more than 4 million people were started on antiretroviral therapy (ART) in developing countries because of the reduced price of the generic version of ARV.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it was ascertained that more than 90 per cent of HIV-positive patients on treatment are taking generic ARV drugs and for many other diseases.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, generic ARV has successfully reduced much of morbidity and mortality not only of HIV/AIDS but also of many other deadly diseases.<sup>15-17</sup>

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## PEER REVIEW

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## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing

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