MEDIA RELEASE

CARPHA CRS Recommends its First Biosimilar Product to help with Cancer Management

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. 6 November 2019. The CARPHA Caribbean Regulatory System (CRS) recently recommended its first biosimilar product which can become part of the support to cancer management in its Member States. Pegfilgrastim, the active ingredient, is designed to boost the body’s immune response, thereby allowing cancer patients to keep fighting infections while receiving cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, that harm blood cell production. It may be used in the management of various cancers.

“One of the most severe side effects of life saving cancer treatments is the suppression of white blood cells which leaves cancer patients at risk of developing various infections. I am very excited to know that CARPHA/CRS has been able to recommend a drug that helps the body to keep producing white blood cells. This is a step towards making an affordable treatment available in the Caribbean market, which will enhance the quality of a cancer patient’s life.” said Dr. Joy St. John, CARPHA Executive Director.

Using a review method based on reliance, the CRS verified that the product seeking market authorization in CARICOM is the same version as the product currently approved by the regulatory authority of reference the US Food and Drug Administration and is on the market in the United States.

According to the World Health Organization “a biosimilar is a biotherapeutic product that is similar in terms of quality, safety and efficacy to an already licensed reference biologic product.” “The inclusion of quality-assured biosimilars and generic medicines in pharmaceutical markets will provide Member States with access to additional treatment options at lower prices as biosimilars are estimated to be 15-20% cheaper than the original brand drug,” said Dr. Rian Marie Extavour, Technical Coordinator CARPHA CRS.

The CARPHA CRS supports pharmaceutical regulations in CARICOM Member States by making product recommendations for market authorisation and supporting VigiCarib, the regional network for pharmacovigilance and post-marketing surveillance.

The CARPHA CRS uses a reliance approach and verifies that the medicines recommended for market authorization are the same as those approved and on the markets of countries with regulatory authorities of reference. Medicines currently recommended by the CARPHA CRS may be found at: http://new.carpha.org/What-We-Do/Programmes-and-Projects/CRS/Caribbean-Regulatory-System.

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