Emcure prices weight-loss drug Poviztra at ₹2,200/week

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Emcure is betting on affordability and accessibility to scale the brand as demand for obesity drugs rises. BLOOMBERG

Emcure Pharmaceuticals launched weight-loss drug Poviztra on Monday under its exclusive partnership with Novo Nordisk. This marks the company's entry into the fast-growing obesity segment in the country.

Poviztra is a semaglutide injection, and comes as a once-weekly pen device in five strengths of 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1.0 mg, 1.7 mg and a maintenance dose of 2.4 mg. The products are priced competitively, starting at roughly ₹2,200 a week, or ₹8,790 per month, and increasing with the strength of the dosage.

Semaglutide is also sold under brand names Wegovy and Ozempic by Novo Nordisk, with the latter being launched earlier this month at a similar price as Poviztra.

"We are very, very bullish about the price point that we have introduced at roughly ₹2,200 per week of the starting lower dose, which will be allowing for increased affordability and accessibility, we believe, across the country," Vikas Thapar, president - Corporate Development, Strategy and Finance, told *Mint* in an interview.

The Pune-headquartered firm expects the drug to be a significant opportunity, as the market for weight-loss drugs like semaglutide and tirzepatide is growing. "We certainly think that if we're able to execute and if it really continues to give the outcomes as has been seen worldwide, it can become a very, very significant brand for us as a company," said Thapar.

Poviztra is an exclusive launch with Novo Nordisk; Emcure is also working on its own generic semaglutide

Partnering with innovator Novo Nordisk gives it an edge, according to the company's CEO and managing director Satish Mehta. "Bioavailability is one of the major challenges, to that extent, a product coming from the innovators will always have a competitive advantage and edge," he said.

Semaglutide is set to lose patent exclusivity in March 2026, opening the market up to cheaper generics. Several Indian drugmakers, including Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's, and Natco, are preparing to launch their own versions of the drug. However, Mehta believes that the innovator product will be able to hold market share, a thought echoed by Novo Nordisk India managing director Vikrant Shrotriya in an earlier interview.

"In insulin, lots of generics came into the market, but the insulin market continues to be dominated by three multinationals. [It's] early days, but I feel something similar will play out as far as this molecule is concerned," said Mehta.

Emcure, which has a strong gynaecology and cardiac portfolio, is expanding its diabetes and metabolic portfolio, which it expects to become a significant part of its overall product basket.

In July, the company signed an exclusive distribution deal for Sanofi's oral anti-diabetic (OAD) products, like Amaryl (Glimepiride) and Cetapin (Metformin).

"As we build the company, we cannot ignore metabolics, especially when India is likely to have the dubious distinction of emerging as the capital of obesity or diabetes. So, we are pretty much going to be in that segment," said Mehta, explaining that the company will pursue a strategy of in-licensing as well as in-house R&D to build the portfolio.

Emcure is also working on its own version of generic semaglutide for emerging markets. The company is also expecting to be in the second wave of launches for generic semaglutide in Canada, where the patent expires in March, Thapar said.

India has 254 million obese people and over 100 million with diabetes, with volumes of these drugs set to grow as prices fall. Novo's competitor, Eli Lilly, has also partnered with domestic drugmaker Cipla to increase access to its drug tirzepatide, known by the brand name Mounjaro.