

Pharma-US: EvaluatePharma Predicts That Abbott's Humira to Top Roche's Avastin as Best-Selling Drug By 2016; Avastin Will Probably Cap 2016 Sales at \$8.9B

Abbott's rheumatoid arthritis treatment Humira will outsell Roche's Avastin cancer medicine by 2016 to become the world's most lucrative drug, according to research company EvaluatePharma. Revenue from Humira will increase about 9 percent annually to \$10.1 billion in 2016 from \$5.6 billion in 2009, EvaluatePharma said today (5/3).

"Clinical setbacks" aimed at broadening Avastin's use to fight tumors will probably cap its 2016 sales at \$8.9 billion, the company said. Avastin had been expected to eclipse Pfizer's Lipitor.

Lipitor will face competition from cheaper generic versions after its patent expires next year. Still, Pfizer will remain the world's largest drugmaker, aided by its \$68 billion acquisition of Wyeth last year, EvaluatePharma said. Merck is set to be second. Pfizer's sales are projected to drop 15 percent to \$47.1 billion in 2016 from 2009 levels, according to the statement, while Merck's revenue will climb 11 percent to \$46.3 billion.

Teva will rank among the world's 10 largest pharmaceutical companies by 2016 as the generic-drug maker benefits from a looming "patent cliff," the research company said.

Avastin is approved for colorectal, lung and breast malignancies. Roche wants to expand the use of Avastin by testing it against different tumors and at earlier stages of disease. Study results released this year showed the medicine failed to prolong the lives of patients with prostate and stomach cancer, though it stalled ovarian tumors.

Source: Bloomberg/Lee, May 3, 2010

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