

Cipla set to launch repurposed drug Favipiravir for COVID-19: CSIR

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New Delhi, Jul 24 (India Science Wire): Cipla has scaled up the process in their manufacturing facility and approached Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for permission to launch of a repurposed drug Favipiravir for COVID-19 in India. Given that DCGI has given restricted emergency use for Favipiravir in the country, Cipla is now all set to launch the product to help patients suffering from COVID-19. “Hopefully by August 1st this will be available in the market” said Dr S Chandrasekhar, Director, IICT while speaking with *India Science Wire*.

An off-patent anti-viral Favipiravir has been originally discovered by Fuji, Japan has shown promise in clinical trials for treatment of COVID-19 patients, especially the mild and the moderate patients. It is an Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API). An active ingredient is the ingredient in a pharmaceutical drug or pesticide that is biologically active.

CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IICT) has developed a cost- effective process using locally available chemicals to synthesize Favipiravir and transferred the technology to Cipla Limited.

The pharma industry buys very advanced drug intermediates also called as Key Starting Materials (KSM) from China or some other countries. After doing one or two synthetic operations and these are made into final products. “We make KSM ourselves starting from chemicals manufactured locally, that brings down the cost of these products” said Dr Chandrasekhar.

“The technology provided by CSIR-IICT is very efficient and makes it affordable and allows Cipla to make large quantities of the product within a short span of time” said Dr Chandrasekhar.

DG-CSIR, Dr Shekhar C Mande said that CSIR is working with industry in developing quick solutions and products for mitigation of COVID-19 and this partnership with Cipla is an example of how CSIR is committed in bringing repurposed drugs on a fast track.

“We are taking up some clinical trials for repurposing of some other drugs too, that will take some time” told Dr Chandrasekhar. (India Science Wire)

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