

Japan is the largest importer of Korean drugs

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According to the 2017 pharmaceutical industry data and statistics information released by the Korea Pharmaceutical and Bio-Pharma Manufacturers' Association, Korea exported \$3.12 billion (3.39 trillion won) worth pharmaceutical ingredients and finished drugs last year, and imported \$5.84 billion (6.36 trillion won) worth.

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Japan was the largest importer of Korean products. Local drugmakers exported \$304.6 million worth of drug materials and \$158.1 million worth of finished drugs to Japan, to a total of \$462.8 million. Following Japan's lead was Croatia that imported \$397.8 million in finished drugs, and Ireland with \$228.8 million drug materials. Many global pharmaceutical giants place their headquarters and factories in Ireland where tax rates are lower than the U.S.

The news report further stated that Korea's top 10 export destinations included China with \$208 million in exports (\$95.9 million in ingredients, \$112 million in finished goods), Vietnam with \$182 million, Hungary with \$135 million, the

U.S. with \$116.2 million, Brazil with \$113.2 million, Germany with \$80.9 million, and India with \$77.8 million.

While Korea exported drugs to both advanced and developing countries, the nation imported drugs mostly from industrial nations. In particular, Korea imported pharmaceutical ingredients and finished drugs the most from the U.K., highlighted the agency in its report.

Korean pharmaceutical firms imported \$13.2 million in ingredients and \$837.6 million in finished drugs from the U.K. last year, totaling \$854.6 million (930 billion won). The U.S. came next with \$125.3 million in imports of raw materials, \$633.6 million in finished goods, and \$416.1 million in quasi-drugs such as beauty products, totaling \$800.6 million (871.6 billion won).

From China, Korea imported \$507.9 million in raw materials for drugs, \$660 million in finished medications, \$48.9 million in quasi-drugs, and \$60.7 million herbs in Oriental medicine.

Other countries where Korea imported drugs in large scales included Germany with \$581.4 million, Japan with \$510.7 million, Switzerland with \$461.5 million, France with \$243.9 million, the Netherlands with \$241.6 million, Italy with \$199.2 million, and India with \$177.8 million.

Korea's Celltrion Healthcare was the biggest exporter. The biopharmaceutical firm has overseas licenses for major biosimilar products, including Celltrion's autoimmune diseases treatment Remsima. With Remsima prescribed in the U.S. and Europe, Celltrion Healthcare became the first biopharmaceutical firm to become the nation's largest drug exporter.

The second-largest drug exporter was Yuhan with 246.4 billion won exports, followed by Green Cross with 203.8 billion won. Most of Yuhan's exports consisted of pharmaceutical ingredients going into multinational pharmaceutical companies. In the case of Green Cross, blood products mainly drove the export growth.

ST Pharm, a drug ingredient-making subsidiary of Dong-A Socio Holdings, posted 165.5 billion won exports, on the back of its supply for multinational pharmaceutical giants. Samsung Biologics, equipped with factories for global biomedical products, exported 147.4 billion won worth of drugs.

Other major exporters include Dong-A ST with 146.8 billion won, Suheung with 134.3 billion won, Kolon Life Science with 127 billion won, Hanmi Pharmaceutical with 109.6 billion won, Daewoong Pharmaceutical with 95.6 billion won. The combined exports of the top 10 exporters reached 2.12 trillion

won.