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ASIA EDITION

Japan approves Novartis' psoriasis drug

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Singapore: Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) has approved Novartis' Cosentyx (secukinumab, formerly known as AIN457), for the treatment of both psoriasis vulgaris and psoriatic arthritis (PsA) in adults who are not adequately responding to systemic therapies (except for biologics).

Cosentyx works by inhibiting the action of IL-17A, a protein that is found in high concentrations in skin affected by psoriasis and central to the development of inflammatory diseases, including psoriasis and PsA. As approximately 30 percent of psoriasis patients are also affected by PsA globally, this approval means that these patients in Japan now have a new treatment option that effectively treats both diseases.

"We are pleased that Japan is the first country to approve Cosentyx for both psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, providing an alternative treatment option for more than 400,000 Japanese citizens who are living with psoriasis, and those also living with psoriatic arthritis," said Mr David Epstein, division head, Novartis Pharmaceuticals. "Nearly half of patients with psoriasis and PsA are unhappy with their current therapies. With this approval, we are able to address this critical unmet need and aim to make a real difference in the quality of life of these patients."

Psoriasis is a chronic immune-mediated disease characterized by thick and extensive skin lesions, called plaques, known to cause itching, scaling and pain; it is associated with significant impairment of physical and psychological quality of life.