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Singapore: US drug giant Hospira recently announced that the biosimilar Inflectra (infliximab) has been registered as a therapy in Australia. Inflectra is an artificial compound that is biologicaly similar to Remicade (infliximab). As a biosimilar, Inflectra has been developed to mimic the high standards of biologic manufacturing to treat the same disease as the original product.

The drug can be used to treat a total of eight inflammatory conditions can be treated with Inflectra, including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis (AS), adult and pediatric Crohn's disease, refractory fistulising Crohn's disease, adult and pediatric ulcerative colitis, and plaque psoriasis.

Mr Wayne Lee, associate director of Medical Affairs at Hospira, said, "Registration of Inflectra by the TGA shows that they support the fundamental principles of data extrapolation which allows patients and healthcare professionals to access the full suite of indications. This is an important development for patients, prescribers and payers."

During the next five years, the Australian government expects that the market of biosimilar medicines will expand due expiry of patents on original products. This growth is estimated to deliver $880 million in Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) savings.