



Filling the gap

How off-patent medicines can **improve the equity and quality** of cancer care

RECOMMENDATIONS to address equity in access and quality of cancer care:



Finding synergies and sharing best practices

Access to oncology treatment and care across Europe is not equitable – among countries, and even across regions and hospitals within countries. More action is needed to find **synergies and to share best practices for countries to achieve equitable access to cancer care**.



Comprehensive uptake policies

Comprehensive policies which support the uptake of generic and biosimilar medicines are required to broaden patient access to oncology therapies. **Incentives and utilisation support measures** would allow reliable supply as well as efficiency gains for pharmaceutical budgets, **greater access and care equity, and more patients to be treated**.



EU and National cancer strategies promoting the use of off-patent medicines

EU and National cancer strategies should actively promote the use of off-patent medicines and redeploy the freed up budget. Reinvestment would improve the quality of cancer care by involving all actors in the benefit sharing.



Removing barriers after expiry of Intellectual Property (IP)

The removal of access restrictions and anti-competitive marketing strategies after expiry of Intellectual Property (IP) and other protections is essential to leverage the opportunity with off-patent oncology treatment.



Adapting EU the framework to develop Value Added Medicines

For a more **holistic and patient-centred approach** towards disease prevention and treatment, value added medicines development should be supported by **adapting the EU framework to better support innovation in off-patent medicines by repurposing, reformulating or combining therapies to optimise oncology treatments**.



Biosimilar medicines

- A growing number of new cancer therapies are biological molecules.
- In 2020, it was estimated that 3 molecules used to treat cancer accounted for 15% of all cancer medicine sales and that the biosimilar options could bring a cost reduction of EUR 2.4 billion in Europe per year¹.
- Existing **biosimilar competition** in cancer care has created **opportunities for re-investment of savings** into other cancer care products or services. Robust policies should promote their uptake.



value added medicines

- **Continuous innovation in off-patent medicines** is needed to improve treatments for larger patient populations with chronic and non-communicable diseases, such as cancer.
- The **repurposing of existing medicines** delivers on **unmet medical need** at a sustainable cost for healthcare systems.
- Transition to **patient-centric care models** (such as home care) will need to be supported by changes in the **delivery of medicines** to enable new care models.



Generic medicines

- The **majority of cancer agents and supportive care prescriptions** (e.g. anti-nausea and antibiotics) are **generic medicines**. Generic medicines represent close to 70% of prescription medicines in Europe.
- The societal value of existing medicines in the treatment of cancer should encourage careful and strategic consideration of **procurement and purchasing policies**, conducive to ensuring availability.

¹-Chapman, S., Paris, V., & Lopert, R. (2020). *Challenges in access to oncology medicines*. 123.