

Nicotine, alcohol addiction treatments comprise over 50% substance abuse treatment pipeline

04 April 2016 | Features | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Despite this, there are several promising candidates in development targeting a range of other indications including opioid and cocaine addiction, according to business intelligence provider GBI Research.

The company's latest CBR Pharma report states that various new approaches currently under investigation will see novel and first-in-class treatments, including vaccines, redefine the current arena.

A growing treatment pipeline and continued research and investment in this field reflects the fact that current therapies for those suffering from various drug addictions remain insufficient.

More than 27 million people worldwide are currently classified as problem drug users under the Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's guidelines.

Of these, only one in six has access to therapy while many countries still have no adequate services for treating substance abuse.

Mr Rodrigo G Gamboa, Managing Analyst for GBI Research, explains: "One of the main reasons why substance abuse remains high and is so difficult to treat is that there is not yet a complete understanding of the various aspects encompassing this global issue.

"Several molecular targets have been identified and have furthered drug development, but there are various other targets that are not clearly understood. The poor understanding of the brain mechanisms of addiction represents a significant challenge in terms of developing a highly effective drug, or combination drugs, for treating addiction."

Currently, there are 242 companies marketing therapies for substance abuse, and more of these are involved in marketing treatments for alcohol addiction than any other kind.

One in every 12 adults suffers from alcohol abuse or dependence in the US, which illustrates the level of demand for these therapies.

Mr Gamboa continues: "The competitive landscape is comprised of both large pharmaceutical companies and specialized companies focusing solely on developing substance abuse treatments, with the top eight companies comprising Teva, Allergan, Mylan, Sun Pharma, Sanofi, Psycos Remedies, Rusan Pharma, and Aspen Pharmacare.

"Despite the current market focused so heavily on alcohol abuse, there are significant numbers of products in development for the treatment of other addictions and associated withdrawal syndromes. Emerging product segments include cocaine and opioid addictions, with 26 and 21 pipeline drugs, respectively, while the cannabinoids and methamphetamine treatment segments also have several promising drugs in active development."