India's onslaught on drug patents continues

The Obama administration recently placed India on a 'watch list' over its lack of intellectual property protection for innovator companies. Undaunted by US concerns, India

continues to pursue its own public health interests, adopting policies that support the generics industry. Thus far, most of the companies affected have been big pharma rather

than biotech, although Indian authorities have revoked patents on blockbuster biologics Pegasys and Herceptin (**Table 1**).

Lisa Melton *London*

Table 1 Revoked biopharma patents so far

Drug	Company (location)	Indication	Date revoked	Grounds for patent refusal
Nexavar (sorafenib)	Bayer (Leverkusen, Germany)	Hepatocellular carcinoma	March 2012	Compulsory license issued, citing high cost
Sutent (sunitinib)	Pfizer (New York)	Cancer	June 2012	Obviousness
Pegasys (peginterferon alfa-2a)	Roche (Basel)	Hepatitis C	November 2012	Obviousness and high cost
Iressa (gefitinib)	AstraZeneca (Cambridge, UK)	Breast cancer, Non-small cell lung cancer	November 2012	Obviousness
Dulera (formoterol and mometasone suspension)	Merck (Whitehouse Station, New Jersey)	Asthma	December 2012	Lack of invention
Gleevec (imatinib mesylate)	Novartis	Leukemia	April 2013	Patent extensions based on minor changes. No increase in therapeutic efficacy
Tykerb (lapatinib)	GlaxoSmithKline (London)	Breast cancer	July 2013	Lack of innovation, use of evergreening
Ganfort (fixed dose combination of bimatoprost and timolol) Combigan (fixed dose combination of brimonidine and timolol)	Allergan (Irvine, California)	Glaucoma	August 2013	Patents challenged by domestic drugmaker Ajanta Pharma
Herceptin (trastuzumab)	Roche	Breast cancer	August 2013	New form of known substance. Roche relinquished patent rights

Around the world in a month