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## Dr. Reddy's registers innovative immunotherapy in South Africa for rare head and neck cancer

### Closing a critical treatment gap for patients with recurrent or metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma

**Johannesburg, South Africa / Hyderabad, India – August 03, 2026** – According to the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), one in four South Africans will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> While awareness campaigns have helped millions recognise the warning signs of breast, prostate and lung cancer, hundreds of rare cancers continue to go largely unnoticed; often because their symptoms resemble everyday illnesses that people experience without a second thought.<sup>2</sup>

Addressing an important unmet need in oncology care, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories South Africa has announced the registration of a newly registered PD-1 inhibitor for the treatment of recurrent or metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma (RM-NPC), a rare and aggressive form of head and neck cancer. The registration marks an important step forward in expanding access to modern cancer treatments for patients living with this rare disease.

Unlike traditional chemotherapy, which works by killing rapidly dividing cancer cells but can also affect healthy fast-growing cells such as those in the bone marrow, digestive tract and hair follicles, immunotherapy takes a different approach. It is a form of biological therapy that helps the body's own immune system recognise and fight cancer more effectively. By harnessing the immune system rather than directly attacking cancer cells, immunotherapy represents a significant advancement in modern oncology and has transformed the treatment landscape for several cancers, offering new hope for patients with certain advanced or difficult-to-treat cancers.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://cansa.org.za/south-african-cancer-statistics/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ezra.com/en-gb/blog/rare-cancers-awareness>

<sup>3</sup> <https://anaesthetics.ukzn.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Chemotherapy-Ref-2015.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/types/immunotherapy>

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The World Health Organisation estimates that there are more than 500 rare cancers, many of which receive little public attention despite the devastating impact they have on patients and their families.<sup>5</sup> Among them is nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC), one of the rarest forms of head and neck cancer in South Africa.

According to the 2024 South African Journal of Oncology, which references GLOBOCAN 2020 data from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the disease has a five-year prevalence of just 0.88 cases per 100,000 people in South Africa. NPC is frequently diagnosed at an advanced stage, creating significant challenges for treatment and long-term disease management.<sup>6</sup>

Despite advances in cancer treatment over the past decade, innovation for recurrent or metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma has remained limited, highlighting a significant unmet need for new therapies.

"Every cancer patient deserves access to innovative treatment options, regardless of how rare their diagnosis may be," says Dr. Rashem Mothilal, General Manager, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories South Africa. "The registration of this immunotherapy represents an important step forward for patients living with recurrent or metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma and reflects our commitment to expanding access to advanced oncology treatments in South Africa."

Nasopharyngeal carcinoma develops in the tissue behind the nose and above the back of the throat. Early symptoms, including persistent nasal congestion, hearing loss, recurrent ear infections and swollen lymph nodes in the neck, can easily be mistaken for more common conditions, often delaying diagnosis until the disease has reached an advanced stage.<sup>7</sup>

The registration of this treatment forms part of Dr. Reddy's broader mission to expand access to innovative cancer therapies and improve outcomes for patients facing complex and often underserved diseases. As cancer care continues to evolve through advancements in immunotherapy and precision medicine, ensuring access to these innovations remains critical to addressing longstanding treatment gaps.

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/cancer#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/cancer#tab=tab_1)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mdpi.com/2673-592X/6/2/16>

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Cancer does not always present with obvious warning signs. Persistent nasal congestion, repeated ear infections, unexplained hearing loss, frequent nosebleeds or swelling in the neck should never be ignored if they continue, worsen or keep returning. While these symptoms are often caused by common conditions<sup>8</sup>, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories strongly encourages anyone experiencing persistent or unexplained symptoms to consult a healthcare professional. Early diagnosis remains one of the most important factors in improving treatment options and outcomes for patients living with nasopharyngeal carcinoma.

For patients living with recurrent or metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma, access to new treatment options can offer renewed hope and the potential for improved outcomes. By advancing access to innovative therapies and promoting greater awareness of rare cancers, the healthcare community can help ensure that no patient is overlooked because of the rarity of their diagnosis.

**About Dr. Reddy's:** Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd. (BSE: 500124, NSE: DRREDDY, NYSE: RDY, NSEIFSC: DRREDDY) is a global pharmaceutical company headquartered in Hyderabad, India. Established in 1984, we are committed to providing access to affordable and innovative medicines. Driven by our purpose of 'Good Health Can't Wait', we offer a portfolio of products and services including APIs, generics, branded generics, biosimilars and OTC. Our major therapeutic areas of focus are gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, diabetology, oncology, pain management and dermatology. Our major markets include – USA, India, Russia & CIS countries, China, Brazil and Europe. As a company with a history of deep science that has led to several industry firsts, we continue to plan ahead and invest in businesses of the future. As an early adopter of sustainability and ESG actions, we released our first Sustainability Report in 2004. Our current ESG goals aim to set the bar high in environmental stewardship; access and affordability for patients; diversity; and governance.

For more information, log on to: [www.drreddys.com](http://www.drreddys.com).

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/ severity of insured loss events, (ii) mortality and morbidity levels and trends, (iii) changing levels of competition and general competitive factors, (iv) changes in laws and regulations and in the policies of central banks and/or governments, (v) the impact of acquisitions or reorganization, including related integration issues, and (vi) the susceptibility of our industry and the markets addressed by our, and our customers', products and services to economic downturns as a result of natural disasters, epidemics, pandemics or other widespread illness, including coronavirus (or COVID-19), and (vii) other risks and uncertainties identified in our public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including those listed under the "Risk Factors" and "Forward-Looking Statements" sections of our Annual Report on Form 20-F for the year ended March 31, 2025. The company assumes no obligation to update any information contained herein.

<sup>7</sup> <https://bih.id/articles/what-are-the-symptoms-of-nasopharyngeal-cancer>

<sup>8</sup> <https://acibademinternational.com/health-library/nasopharyngeal-cancer-neck-lump-nasal-symptoms-and-staging/>