

Pace of new drug approvals rise—and so do their price tags

February 3 2016

Last year, more new drugs reached the market than in any year since 1996. But many have six-figure price tags for a year's worth of treatment and deliver only incremental health benefits. What does this mean for patients and the pharmaceutical industry? The cover story in *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, parses the 2015 crop of therapies and who might benefit.

Lisa Jarvis, a senior correspondent at C&EN, reports that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved 45 new drug products last year. Of those, one third fell into a class of compounds called biologics, which include antibodies, peptides and enzymes. Nearly half are designed to treat "orphan" diseases, conditions that affect fewer than 200,000 people each. Different types of cancer are also targeted by several of the new treatments.

Various changes at the FDA appear to be helping to speed up the drug pipeline, which serves pharmaceutical companies well. Industry watchers expect more than a dozen of the new therapies will be blockbusters and top \$1 billion in annual sales. But the impact on patients will be less cut-and-dried. Although one cancer drug could potentially prolong patients' lives by years, others might add only months at great cost. A dozen approved therapies for cancer and other conditions are expected to come with price tags between \$100,000 and \$310,000 per year.

More information: The Year in New Drugs -

cen.acs.org/articles/94/i5/Year-New-Drugs.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

Citation: Pace of new drug approvals rise—and so do their price tags (2016, February 3)
retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-02-pace-drug-riseand-price-tags.html>

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