New Active Substances (NAS) Launched During 2020

It might seem counterintuitive, but more novel drugs made their market debut during COVID-19 than in any other year, with 82 released onto the market in 2020. The effects of the pandemic might not be fully felt until this year, or even over onto the market in 2022. The sun was rising in Asia, though, with almost a fifth of all NASs debuting in China, Japan, and China coming in third with seven homegrown debutantes.

The US remains pre-eminent as the country of first launch, having 54% of new drugs launch in the US versus Japan/China in third with seven in 2020 from the 59% seen in the preceding year. It was a very good year then for both, which take 10 across all countries.

Glaxo and Pfizer share the throne

In the year of the Plague War, Gilead Sciences heads the table by virtue of having the greater NAS figures and pipeline size ratio. The Californian-headquartered company had a match-winning total of 24 from last year with big contributions from drugs and vaccines against COVID-19. AstraZeneca joined Gilead in producing four novel NASs, though its head-to-head displayed the biggest drop in 2020 from 15 last year to one in 2020 (a COVID-19 vaccine). Top 20 company Pfizer joint second is producing four novel NASs, including the licensed COVID-19 vaccine from BioNTech.

The US's grip has loosened slightly, dropping to 54% of new drugs debuting in 2020, with Europe 10 across all countries. The UK is very much in the mix, as are France and Austria. Bahrain and Dem Rep Congo are one in 2020 from the 59% seen in the preceding year.

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USA versus Japan/China. The US has lost its majority grip, slipping to 58% of all drug debuts in 2020 from the 59% seen in the preceding year. GlaxoSmithKline/Pfizer/Shionogi joined AstraZeneca and Sanofi in producing two novel NASs.

Regarding geographical origin, the US is very much in the mix, as are France and Austria.

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