



India's Pharmaceuticals And Local Production In Africa

How does India's trade in generic pharmaceuticals impact on local production and public health security within sub-Saharan Africa?

The challenge

Indian pharmaceutical firms supply large volumes of medicines to sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, India is known by groups such as Médecines Sans Frontières as the "pharmacy of the developing world" for its relatively low-cost supply of medicines across the global South – especially for anti-retrovirals. At the same time, industry and health policymakers within sub-Saharan recognise a reliance on imported medicines, as well as a continued high disease burden. A number of goals and initiatives have been formulated to promote local pharmaceutical production on the continent, including with the support of international organisations such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. Indian imports could potentially form a competitive challenge to these imports, but could also offer key partnerships to promote local pharmaceutical production and health security.

Our research

Dr Rory Horner of the Global Development Institute has been awarded an Economic and Social Research Council Future Research Leaders' Award, for a project titled: "India's pharmaceuticals, local production and public health security in sub-Saharan Africa: a comparative study". This is a three year award which will allow Dr Horner to conduct a comparative study of Indian pharmaceuticals and locally manufactured medicines in sub-Saharan Africa. The project will run from September 2016 until August 2019 and is also supported by a Hallsworth Research Fellowship from the Faculty of Humanities at The University of Manchester.

The research will identify the nature and extent of Indian pharmaceuticals' presence within sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on three main regions – East, West and Southern Africa (comparing selected smaller and larger countries within each). The project will adopt a global value chain (GVC) and global production network (GPN) analytical framework to map the relationship between different actors involved in this South-South trade. Empirical research involves collection and analysis of secondary trade data and primary interviews with key stakeholders (policymakers, firms, and NGOs). It will examine the role and relationships between various actors (e.g. firms, industry associations, states, international organisations) in the supply of pharmaceuticals for sub-Saharan Africa. This will facilitate explanation of:

1. The role of Indian firms in governing South-South value chains, i.e. influencing rules, standards and expectations for participation, and thus shaping development outcomes in pharmaceuticals;
2. Upgrading possibilities for African firms from participating in these South-South value chains, including expanding local manufacturing;
3. State policies (e.g. industrial policies, public procurement) shaping the dynamics of Indian imports and local production.



Further evidence is required into the presence and activities of both Indian and locally-owned pharmaceutical companies in sub-Saharan Africa to support policymakers where information has often been relatively limited.



Dr Rory Horner
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Research impact

This project will provide the first cross-regional study within Africa of the Indian pharmaceutical industry and its implications for local production. This research will build impact through ongoing and direct engagement with the principle beneficiaries — policymakers for sub-Saharan Africa pharmaceuticals. The aim is to influence beneficiaries' strategies for improved pharmaceutical supply in sub-Saharan Africa. The project will have a strong knowledge exchange component, involving policy workshops, blogs, and briefing notes to enhance research impact. For example, tailored briefings will be created for policymakers in the three African regions on upgrading strategies of local firms and on the presence and activities of Indian firms.

This engagement and knowledge exchange will promote learning about different national and regional experiences of imported and locally produced medicines within sub-Saharan Africa. The research project will therefore generate a better understanding of industrial and trade policies that will serve the health of interests of sub-Saharan Africa and, ultimately, will influence key stakeholders to introduce these policies.



The South-South nature of India's pharmaceutical trade into Africa, much of it relatively independent of involvement from the global North, and the fact that it crosses boundaries between the economic and social aspects of development – through providing essential medicines, make this research particularly relevant to the new era of global development which is now upon us.



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Dr Rory Horner's research explores industrial development and international trade, which links to the political economy of globalisation research theme within the Global Development Institute. He completed his PhD at the Graduate School of Geography, Clark University (USA) exploring the growth of India's pharmaceutical industry and its response to the re-introduction of product patent protection in 2005 as a condition of India's membership of the World Trade Organisation.

Since arriving in Manchester in 2013, he has explored the presence and influence of Indian pharmaceutical companies in South Africa and in East Africa. These projects have been crucial building blocks for his current Hallsworth Fellowship and ESRC Future Research Leader project, 2016-2019.

Profile:

www.manchester.ac.uk/research/rory.horner

Press article:

<http://on.china.cn/1ROeQqe>

Find out more

www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk