Evaluate Vantage

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End of an era for Humira – in Europe at least

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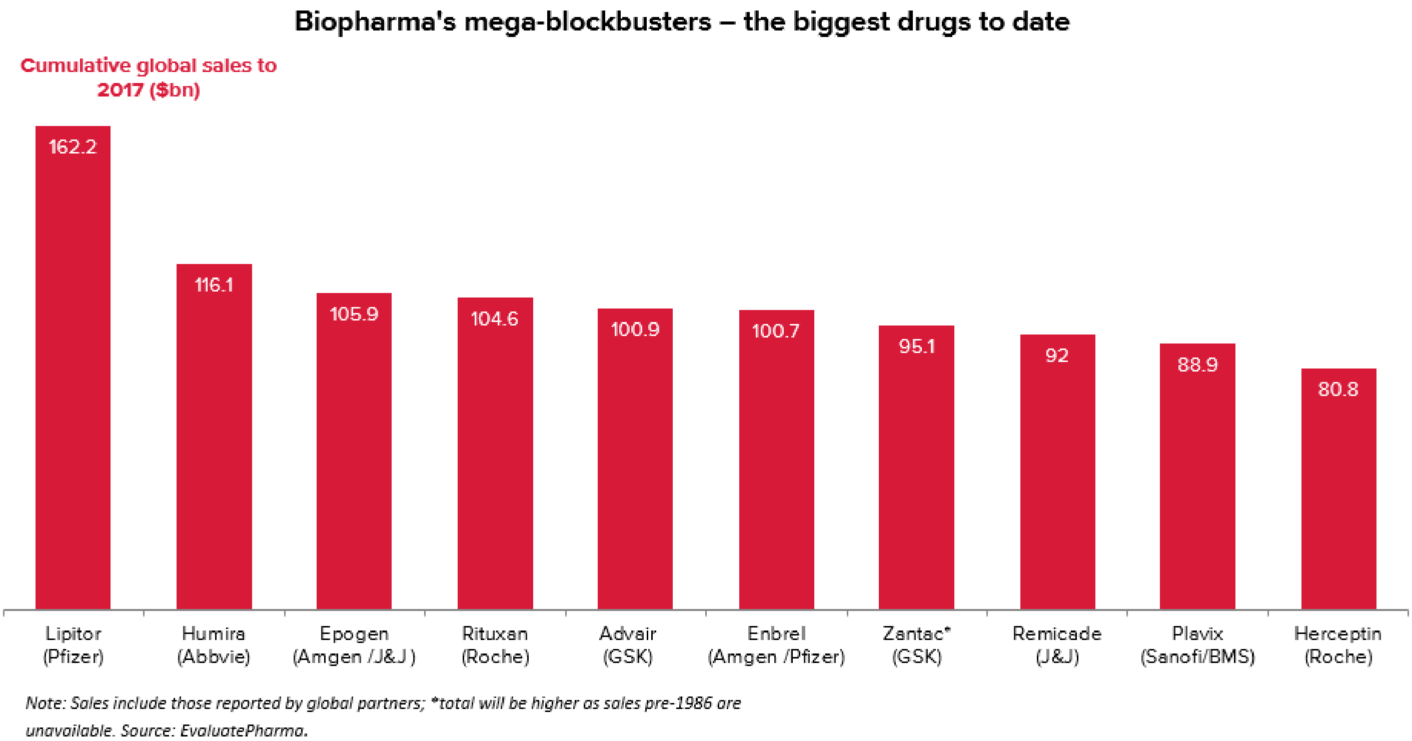
As the engines of biosimilar delivery lorries start revving across Europe today - several companies are poised to take advantage of the lapsed EU patents protecting Abbvie’s mega-blockbuster Humira - it is worth recalling just how commercially successful this anti-TNF antibody has been. Up to the end of last year the treatment for various autoimmune conditions had generated $116.1bn in cumulative sales, a figure only beaten by Lipitor’s record (*The mega-blockbusters – biologicals dominate biopharma’s hall of fame, March 8, 2018*). The loss of brand protection in Europe will be painful for Abbvie, but the region is far from the most important for the franchise: pre-patent expiry EU sales accounted for less than a fifth of Humira’s global sales, which are forecast to reach an eye-watering $20.7bn this year. Five biosimilars makers have won approval for copycat products in Europe, and Abbvie has said it is prepared to compete on price to protect its market share; branded sales are expected to drop by around 20% in the first year. Cost competition is set to arrive in the US in 2023, and this is when Abbvie will really feel the pain.



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