

THE INDEPENDENT

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Patently obvious

Sir: David Prosser's report "Astrazeneca loses patent on asthma drug" and Jeremy Warner's article "Generics raise pressure on Big Pharma" (19 October) claim that the European patent office's decision to revoke the patent for Symbicort (Astrazeneca's asthma drug) will not have an immediate impact in the EU. That is incorrect. Astrazeneca will lose five years of market exclusivity because Symbicort's original expiry for patent in Europe was 2015. Companies' incentive to invest in new drugs will decrease as they become unable to reap the rewards.

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