

The Last Statin Standing Sits Down

By ACSH Staff — July 21, 2016



As [reported](#) ^[1] in yesterday's *New York Times*, Crestor, the only

statin drug that still retained patent protection, has it no longer. From now on, you will be buying rosuvastatin—the generic name of the drug.

AstraZeneca, the maker of the drug, tried some ethically questionable [legal maneuvering](#) ^[2] to extend the patent for Crestor, but it failed. The company's patent expired on July 8th, and yesterday, the FDA approved Mylan's generic version of the drug. It will be the first of many. At least eight companies plan to sell rosuvastatin, which is considered to be the most potent drug in the statin class.

Crestor was a huge moneymaker for AstraZeneca, with peak sales hitting [\\$6.6 billion in 2011](#) ^[3]. **(1)**

It is unlikely that we will see new statin drugs in the future **(2)**. There are seven statins that are approved in the US, and they have certainly done their job. It has been estimated that since 1987, "[the aggregate social value of statins was estimated to be \\$1.252 trillion](#) ^[4]."

Notes:

(1) By comparison, [peak sales for Pfizer's Lipitor](#) ^[5], which lost patent protection in 2012, were \$13.6 billion in 2006, making it the best selling drug in history.

(2) Biological drugs, such as Praluent and Repatha represent a new approach to treatment lipid disorders, however, they are very expensive.

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[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/21/business/generic-crestor-wins-approval-dealing-a-blow-to-astrazeneca.html?_r=0

[2] <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/28/business/astrazeneca-pushes-to-protect-crestor-from-generic-competition.html>

[3] <http://www.statista.com/statistics/266552/astrazenecas-crestor-revenue/>

[4] <https://morningconsult.com/opinions/drug-development-time/>

[5] <http://www.forbes.com/sites/simonking/2013/01/28/the-best-selling-drugs-of-all-time-humira-joins-the-elite/#351d010d6193>