

Bristol Myers sues AstraZeneca over cancer-treatment patents

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March 18 (Reuters) - Bristol Myers Squibb Co (BMY.N), [opens new tab](#), in a lawsuit made public on Friday, said AstraZeneca's (AZN.L), [opens new tab](#) cancer treatment Imfinzi violates patents related to its blockbuster cancer drug Opdivo.

The [lawsuit, opens new tab](#) in Delaware federal court said that the use of Imfinzi to treat lung and bladder cancer infringes several patents on Bristol's immunotherapy Opdivo.

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An AstraZeneca spokesperson said on Friday that the company was reviewing the complaint and would respond "at the appropriate time."

A representative for Bristol Myers declined to comment.

New York-based Bristol Myers recorded over \$7.5 billion from worldwide sales of Opdivo last year. Imfinzi brought in over \$2.4 billion in sales for the British drugmaker last year.

Bristol asked the Delaware court for an undisclosed amount of monetary damages.

Opdivo (nivolumab) is a monoclonal antibody designed to block a protein that cancer cells use to avoid the immune system. The treatment essentially takes the brakes off the immune system to fight the cancer.

Opdivo is approved for use against many types of cancer including melanoma and advanced lung, bladder and kidney cancer.

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Imfinzi (duralumab) works in a similar manner. The complaint, which cites several patents, says Bristol invented the methods for enhancing immune responses.

A Bristol Myers subsidiary previously won \$1.2 billion from a Gilead Sciences ([GILD.O](#)), [opens new tab](#) unit whose lymphoma immunotherapy Yescarta from a different class of medicines was found to infringe one of its patents. A U.S. appeals court threw out that award last year.

00:18Kilmar Abrego Garcia is back in the US to face charges, Bondi says

Reporting by Blake Brittain in Washington, D.C.; Editing by Mark Porter and Bill Berkrot

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