



## Immune Thrombocytopenia

Intas Pharmaceuticals (Indian drug maker) has launched an affordable drug **Romiplostim** (Romy) at one-fifth of the price of the currently available drugs for the treatment of **Immune Thrombocytopenia** (a chronic autoimmune blood disorder).

- Romiplostim represents the standard of care but has been available only internationally since 2008.

### Immune Thrombocytopenia

- Immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) is an **autoimmune bleeding disorder** characterized by abnormally **low levels of platelets**.
  - Platelets are specialized blood cells that maintain the integrity of our blood vessel walls and help **prevent and stop bleeding** by accelerating **clotting**.
- As the platelet count falls, the risk of developing **bleeding symptoms** increases.
- In ITP, an **abnormal immune reaction** leads to destruction of the individual's own platelets.

### Symptoms

A child or adult with immune thrombocytopenia may display no symptoms (**asymptomatic**) or the symptoms may not appear until the platelet count is extremely low.

- Skin that bruises very easily and even spontaneously.
- A **rash** consisting of small **red dots** (petechiae) that represent small hemorrhages caused by broken blood vessels or leaks in a capillary wall.
- **Bleeding** from the gums, nose or any area of the body, e.g. in urine or feces
- Blood **blisters** on the inside of cheeks.
- Excessive and prolonged **menstrual bleeding**.

### Causes

- The genetic cause of immune thrombocytopenia is unclear but this condition occurs when the body's **own immune system malfunctions** and attacks the body's tissues and organs (autoimmunity).
  - Normally, the immune system produces proteins called **antibodies**, which attach to specific foreign particles and germs, marking them for destruction.

### Immune Thrombocytopenia in India

- It is estimated that around **42,000 patients** are diagnosed with ITP in India every year.
- Less than **10%** of patients have access to the treatment, which is required to maintain adequate platelet counts for a longer duration.

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