



Can Drug Advertising Make You Healthier?

FINDING THE ANSWER IS NOT SO EASY, REPORTS IPSOS PHARMTRENDS®

August 21, 2003, NEW YORK, NY – With certain drug classes (like allergy) and brands (like Viagra), the impact of direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) is apparent. But has DTCA had a significant impact on patient behavior beyond creating brand awareness? According to Ipsos PharmTrends®, the consumer tracking service of Rx and OTC purchase behavior, DTCA has helped make Americans more aware of certain disease symptoms, as well as potential drug treatment options.

Ipsos PharmTrends, a division of Ipsos-Insight, the global marketing research firm and member of the Ipsos Group of companies, has identified preliminary research which indicates that Prescription drug ads are encouraging patients who suffer from chronic conditions to become more compliant with their drug regimen.

“Study results of consumers tracked by Ipsos PharmTrends indicate that DTCA reminds them to take their medication and refill their prescriptions, thereby creating a “call to compliance.” Other studies show that DTCA has helped expand awareness of diseases, augment incidence of treatment, and increase utilization for some classes of drugs,” said Arindam Mukherjee, Senior Research Analyst, Ipsos-Insight. To view Mr. Mukherjee’s complete report, go to [“Compliance Through Direct-to-Consumer Advertising”](#).

“Increased drug compliance should be making Americans healthier, but the full impact of DTCA on patient behavior and health, however, can be difficult to measure. Further investigation is necessary to measure the full effects of DTCA - isolated from other factors, such as an aging population, increased prescription drug coverage, and drug marketing to healthcare professionals.”

As for manufacturers and marketers, Mukherjee said: “Ongoing analysis can help companies identify opportunities (for example, the impact of scripts on compliance), offer diagnostics to help focus marketing efforts (such as answering whether sampling affects compliance in a particular class), evaluate promotional spending against consumers, and other relevant topics. With comprehensive datasets, manufacturers can unleash the power of DTCA to affect health outcomes.”

For chronic conditions, demographic changes like population aging can have a strong effect on drug use and sales, as well as compliance. The increase in insurance coverage (from 25% of the total national prescription billing in 1990 to 44% in 2000) has played a role in the increase in prescription drug spending. Consumers are more likely to fill a prescription if the cost is at least partly absorbed by their insurer.

Finally, professional promotion is the mainstay of all prescription drug marketing. For decades, pharmaceutical manufacturers have focused their promotional spending on marketing to physicians and other healthcare professionals. In the late nineties, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration loosened restrictions on branded promotional advertising to consumers. Since then, DTCA by drug companies has ballooned, increasing by nearly 200% from 1997 to 2002. Still, promotions directed at physicians remain the largest part of the promotional mix. It is estimated that manufacturers spent \$16.4 billion on sampling and detailing to doctors in 2001 alone.



Ipsos PharmTrends Methodology

Ipsos PharmTrends® syndicated tracking service captures both prescription fulfillment and over-the-counter purchasing data through a longitudinal and continuous consumer panel of 16,000 households that is representative of the U.S. census composition. Each month, panelists report their prescription and over-the-counter purchases for the treatment of a full spectrum of conditions (general and specific). The monthly tracking began in 1997.

To learn more about Ipsos PharmTrends® please visit our [Homepage](#).

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Ipsos-Insight is the company's flagship U.S. marketing research division. Ipsos-Insight provides custom and tracking research, including concept and product testing, attitude and usage studies, omnibus surveys, tracking systems, brand loyalty, volume forecasting, marketing models, and advanced analytics, to domestic clients as well as U.S.-based multinationals. It also acts as the portal to Ipsos specializations in advertising research, forecasting, modeling, and consulting, global research, public opinion research, and customer satisfaction research.

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