



Slowdown in the OTC products market in Poland in 2010

The growth rate of the Polish market of OTC medicines, dietary supplements and dermocosmetics will decline to 3% in 2010, from 11% in 2009, according to the latest report from PMR, a research and consulting company, entitled "OTC market in Poland in 2010. Switch strategies and development forecasts for 2010-2012". PMR expects a double-digit increase in the sales of these products in 2011 and 2012, which will exceed PLN 10.6bn (€2.7bn) in 2012.

11% growth of the OTC market in 2009

In 2009, the Polish market of OTC medicines, dermocosmetics and dietary supplements was worth PLN 8.5bn (€2.0bn), representing an 11% growth rate year on year. Thus, in spite of the economic crisis, the market expanded dynamically. *"In 2009 the high flu incidence contributed to large market growth, especially in case of OTC medicines. In all, the number of flu cases in 2009 reached almost 1.1 million, the highest figure since 2003, when there were approximately 1.2 million reported"* says Monika Stefanczyk, PMR Head Pharmaceutical Market Analyst and the report co-author. Other driving forces behind the market growth included price increases and launches of new products.

In 2010, the value of the market of OTC products will top PLN 8.7bn (€2.2bn), according to PMR estimates. The growth rate of the market will slow to 3%, due to a high reference base and a lower number of infections compared with 2009. We predict that the OTC market will rise at a double-digit rate in the next two years, to exceed PLN 10.6bn (€2.7bn) in 2012. Dietary supplements will be the primary driver of the market growth in the coming years. Although the growth rate for the dietary supplements market will be lower than in the preceding years, it should be noted that it will still be exceptionally high – for instance, it will be higher than the growth pace of the OTC medicines market. We assume that the trends which prevailed in the previous year, and positively stimulated sales, will continue. These trends include the aging population, growing interest in self-treatment, healthy lifestyle and healthy appearance, natural and herbal products.

Non-pharmacy channel contributes 13% of the market's worth

Taking into account only the market of OTC medicines and dietary supplements, according to PMR a mere 13% of the market's value was generated by the non-pharmacy distribution channel in 2009. *"It is due to the fact that a list of products approved for trading in non-pharmacy outlets from October 2009 comprised 525 items (176 OTC medical products). According to a new list, which came into force in November 2010, only OTC medicines based on 52 active substances can be sold at non-pharmacy outlets (grocery stores, service stations, kiosks, chemist stores, etc.)"* says Agnieszka Stawarska, PMR Pharmaceutical Market Analyst and the report co-author.

In the past, the list of OTC medicines admitted to trading at non-pharmacy outlets was defined by both the applicable classification criteria and the lists of medicinal products admitted to non-pharmacy trading. This situation raised numerous doubts as, in fact, if a product meeting the criteria set forth in the regulation on the classification criteria for medicinal products has appeared on the market, the list of products admitted to non-pharmacy trading should have been immediately updated and amended to include this product.

Dietary supplements can be sold outside of pharmacies without any restrictions.

OTC product market in Poland, by sales channel, 2009



Note: OTC drugs and dietary supplements.

Source: report „OTC market in Poland 2010.

Switch strategies and development forecasts for 2010-2012”, PMR, 2010


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