THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Date: Sunday, December 28, 2008
Location: NEW YORK, NY
Circulation (DMA): 786,064 (1)
Type (Frequency): Newspaper (D)
Page: B5
Keyword: Allergan

chandler chicco agency

Eyelash Enhancer Gains Approval

FDA Clears Allergan's Glaucoma Drug for Marketing as Cosmetic Treatment

By Rhonda L. Rundle

Allergan Inc. said it received Food and Drug Administration approval to market Latisse, a beauty treatment that increases the length, thickness and darkness of eyelashes by using a drug the company developed to treat glaucoma.

Latisse, which Allergan plans to launch in February, represents a new use for its seven-year-old glaucoma drug, bimatoprost, which is sold under the brand name Lumigan. The drug's use as a beauty aid was discovered by patients and eye doctors, who have reported for years that a side effect of the Lumigan drops is enhanced eyelashes.

To protect its turf, Allergan is already waging a legal battle with competitors who marketed their own eyelash products based on bimatoprost and similar ingredients.

"Latisse exemplifies our continuing commitment to developing innovative treatments that are studied in well-controlled clinical trials, manufactured to pharmaceutical standards, appropriately labeled for use, and available to consumers as a prescription product," said Scott Whitcup, Allergan's executive vice president of research and development. Latisse will be sold by physicians in states that allow them to dispense drugs. In other states, Latisse will be available at the pharmacy.

Allergan said Latisse's retail price will be $120 for a 30-day supply bottle for both eyes. The treatment is applied daily to the base of the upper lashes with a disposable applicator, which looks like a tiny paint brush.

Latisse users will see longer, fuller and dark lashes in as little as eight weeks, with full results in 16 weeks, Allergan said. Eyelashes will gradually return to their prior appearance if treatment isn't maintained.

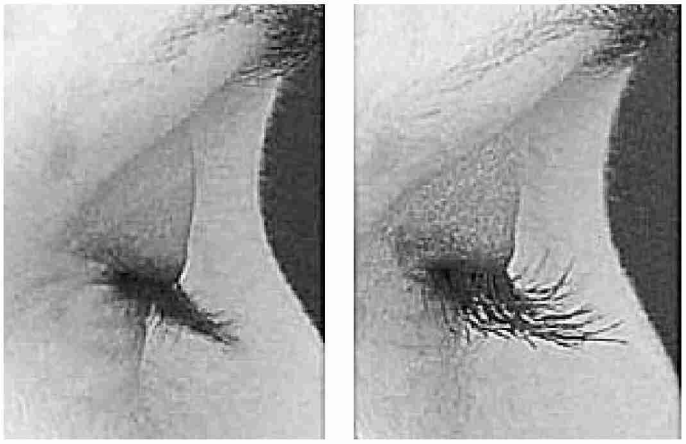
Allergan said that global peak sales could exceed $500 million a year. "We would agree based on the high level of enthusiasm for this product among our industry contacts. However, we think the initial uptake will be muted due to the economic situation," Wachovia Capital Markets Inc. analyst Larry Biegelsen wrote in a research note. He said Latisse will be included in Allergan's discount program to physicians who use large volumes of its products, including notably the antiwrinkle drug Botox.

Allergan said the most common side effects of Latisse are an itching sensation in the eyes and redness, which were reported in about 4% of patients. Latisse may cause darkening of the eyelid skin, which Allergan said may be reversible. In addition, the Irvine, Calif., company said that Latisse may cause permanent increased brown pigmentation of the colored part of the eye, although this problem wasn't observed in its FDA tests.

Some physicians say Latisse may promote eyebrow growth, but this application hasn't been systematically studied. Analysts said it is likely that Allergan will investigate other uses for its drug, including a more potent version for growing hair on bald heads.

Even before Latisse hits the market, Allergan has been aggressively protecting it. After Lumigan's impact on eyelash growth was noticed, some doctors began writing Lumigan prescriptions for cosmetic patients, and competitors raced to create eyelash products that used bimatoprost or similar ingredients.

In response, Allergan pressed patent-infringement cases against several cosmetic companies that were selling their own unapproved formulations on Web sites and in medical spas. Most of the defendants have settled with Allergan and stopped selling their products, but four of them are set for trial next November in federal court in Santa Ana, Calif.



Photos on a doctor's Web site showing eyelash growth from bimatoprost.