

Physician Views: A closer look at Gilead's spectacular Sovaldi launch

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Abstracts

Gilead Sciences' hepatitis C therapy Sovaldi may be on track to become the biggest selling new launch of all time – first-year sales could reach \$5 billion, according to some analysts; see ViewPoints: Stratospheric Sovaldi – analyst tips \$5 billion sales for Gilead Sciences' Hep C drug in 2014 – but important questions about its uptake over the next six to 12 months remain.

Particularly important – in relation to future commercial dynamics – is how the drug is being utilised among the large genotype 1 population, which Gilead recently indicated has accounted for around 70 percent of usage to date.

Genotype 1 patients are viewed as being a key population for all-oral therapies (which dispense for required co-administration with interferon and ribavirin) that are expected to reach the market later in 2014. Thus identifying which types of patient have been treated to date with Sovaldi and 'secondary warehousing' trends (i.e. holding back patients for treatment with all orals) will play a key role in identifying the commercial outlook for subsequent all-oral therapies.

Furthermore, a key question (particularly pertinent for Gilead and its investors given the staggering early uptake of Sovaldi) is the medium- to long-term sustainability of the broader hepatitis C market, given the curative impact of new therapies combined with any positive impact their availability may have on new patient diagnosis rates.

This week's Physician Views poll asks US and EU-based gastroenterologists, hepatologists and infectious disease specialists:

What percentage of diagnosed but treatment naive genotype 1 hepatitis C

patients they expect to 'warehouse' for treatment with a more convenient all-oral therapy?

What concerns they have/would have assuming a biosimilar shares an identical INN with the branded originator?

What their primary reason is for delaying treatment of these patients until an all-oral therapy becomes available?

What percentage of these warehoused genotype 1 patients they expect to treat with Gilead's Sovaldi + ledipasvir all-oral combination?

Given the curative potential of new therapies, shorter duration of treatment, warehousing trends and their knowledge of diagnosis rates, when they anticipate the number of new patients they treat for hepatitis C will begin to decline?

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