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Reckitt Charges Into UK PPI Heartburn Space With Guardium

by David Ridley

With its new esomeprazole-based heartburn and indigestion remedy, Guardium, Reckitt Benckiser is taking head on Pfizer's well-established Nexium Control brand in the UK. The firm hopes that by associating Guardium with its own well-known heartburn brand Gaviscon, and by investing in a multi-million-pound marketing campaign and pharmacy education, it can carve for itself a significant slice of the UK's gastrointestinal market.

Frequent heartburn sufferers in the UK now have a new mass-market proton pump inhibitor (PPI) to turn to in Reckitt Benckiser's new esomeprazole-based drug, Guardium.

"For the first time, the Gaviscon family has a PPI product to offer frequent heartburn sufferers relief and we are excited to bring this product to the UK market," an RB spokesperson told HBW Insight.

Supported by a "multi-million-pound marketing campaign" running across television, radio, digital, out-of-home and trade advertising channels from September until the end of the year, RB said Guardium's PPI mechanism reduced acid reflux and heartburn symptoms by "blocking the acid pumps in your stomach."

One Guardium pill provided 24 hours relief, RB continued, and could be used in conjunction with the firm's other blockbuster gastrointestinal product, Gaviscon.

RB'S PRINT ADVERTISEMENT FOR GUARDIUM IN THE UK



Guardium's association with Gaviscon – reflected in the former's branding and packaging alignment with the latter – and the extensive marketing support behind the launch would help RB's new product stand out against the competition, RB insisted.

Guardium will have to compete with a very well-established brand in Pfizer's Nexium Control, which has since its switch from pharmacy to general sales list status in 2015 been the only branded mass market PPI available the UK.

"The launch of Guardium is a natural progression for RB as it complements, rather than directly competes

with, Gaviscon and other existing medications," RB maintained. "With 11% of the UK population suffering frequently from heartburn and indigestion, the demand for relief is there."

Aside from consumer marketing, RB said it was also investing heavily in pharmacy training – partnering with Walgreens Boots Alliance's Boots Pharmacy stores and developing a "range of educational materials for independent pharmacists to use and refer to" – to not only show consumers there was now a "clear treatment pathway for recurring heartburn," but also to drive the National Health Service's Long-Term Plan. (Also see "[NHS 10-Year Plan A 'Missed Opportunity', Says PAGB](#)" - HBW Insight, 10 Jan, 2019.)

"PPIs are currently the most prescribed dyspepsia remedy by general practitioners, causing significant strain on supply and services," the firm pointed out. "Gaviscon wants to help alleviate pressures on the NHS by converting consumers from prescription to OTC medication."

"Being the UK's leading heartburn brand with high awareness among UK consumers, we are in a strong position to support this strategy," RB added.