

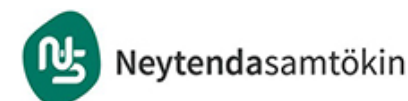
Pharma marketing, social media, and GLP-1 RA medicines



Ancel-la Santos, Senior Health Policy Officer

1 July 2024 - EMA/HMA Multistakeholder workshop on shortages
of Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists

BEUC is proud of its members



GROWING PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

- Medicine shortages are common across countries
- Consumer surveys on shortages show negative impact on people's health and pockets ⁽¹⁾
 - Anxiety
 - Disease worsening
 - Side-effects from alternative treatments
 - Extra costs for consumers
- Pharmacists across the EU spend about 10 hours per week on average addressing shortages ⁽²⁾

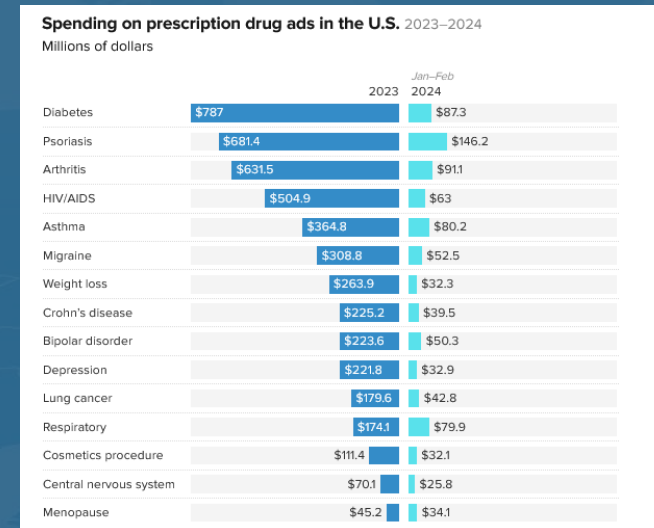
(1) Surveys conducted by BEUC members Altroconsumo (Italy), DECO (Portugal), OCU (Spain) and Test Achats/Test Aankoop as part of the Euroconsumers group, and by the Norwegian Consumer Council. In BEUC, 'Factsheet. Medicine shortages in EU: alarming survey results from some countries', 2022 https://www.beuc.eu/sites/default/files/publications/beuc-x-2022-008_medicine_shortages_in_eu-alarming_survey_results_from_some_countries.pdf

(2) PGEU, 'Medicine shortages report 2023', <https://www.pgeu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/PGEU-Medicine-Shortages-Report-2023.pdf>

GLP-1 RECEPTOR AGONISTS

- Long-lasting shortages
- Multifaceted problem
 - Supply related constraints
 - Demand increase
 - Off-label use
 - Falsified medicines

- Blockbusters
- (Social) media traction
- Pharma promotion



Soure: MediaRadar in Constantino AK and Capoot A, 'Healthy Returns: Weight loss, diabetes drug ad spending tops \$1 billion', CNBC, 3 April 2024 <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/04/03/weight-loss-diabetes-drug-ad-spending-tops-1-billion.html>

A WORD ON PHARMA MARKETING

- Pharma promotion associated with:
 - More prescriptions; higher costs; lower prescribing quality ⁽¹⁻³⁾
- Stricter rules in the EU compared to the US, but...
- Reported concerns with disease awareness campaigns ⁽⁴⁻⁵⁾
- Social media as an amplifier

- (1) Spurling GK, Mansfield PR, Montgomery BD, Lexchin J, et al., 'Information from pharmaceutical companies and the quality, quantity, and cost of physicians' prescribing: a systematic review'. PLoS Med, 7(10):e1000352., 2010.
- (2) Fickweiler F, Fickweiler W, Urbach E., 'Interactions between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry generally and sales representatives specifically and their association with physicians' attitudes and prescribing habits: a systematic review'. BMJ Open. 2017 Sep 7;7(9):e016408
- (3) Brax H, Fadlallah R, Al-Khaled L, et al., 'Association between physicians' interaction with pharmaceutical companies and their clinical practices: a systematic review and meta-analysis'. PLoS One. 2017 Apr 13;12(4):e0175493.
- (4) Leonardo Alves T, Martins de Freitas AF, van Eijk MEC, et al., 'Compliance of disease awareness campaigns in printed Dutch media with national and international regulatory guidelines'. PLoS ONE, 9(9):e106599, 2014.
- (5) Leonardo Alves, T, Poplavska, E, Mezinska, S, et al., 'Disease awareness campaigns in printed and online media in Latvia: cross-sectional study on consistency with WHO ethical criteria for medicinal drug promotion and European standards'. BMC Public Health. 2018; 18: 1322.

DISEASE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN EXAMPLES

“ Obesity is a complex disease but talking to your health care provider about it shouldn't be. ”

Queen Latifah
ACTRESS, MUSICIAN & EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Queen Latifah is a paid spokesperson for Novo Nordisk Inc.



Images taken from the campaign's website, 'It's bigger than me', accessed on 27 June 2024

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Mobile phone snapshot from Facebook's timeline and campaign's website, December 2023



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REFLECTIONS & WAY FORWARD

- Voluntary industry's commitments are welcome but not enough

Regulatory action

- Medicine shortages: Require companies to cut down on marketing
- Revised EU pharma legislation:
 - Require all Member States to establish a system of prior vetting
 - Introduce specific measures on pharma promotion on social media
 - Oblige companies to develop shortage prevention plans
 - Facilitate patient reporting on shortages
- Regulatory cooperation (Europe, global)
- Active monitoring by the authorities and enforcement



https://www.beuc.eu/sites/default/files/publications/BEUC-X-2023-093_From_influence_to_responsibility_Time_to_regulate_influencer-marketing.pdf

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