

Reprint

The New Written Prescription: Leveraging Technology to Measure Change in Physician Behavior as it Occurs

By John Mack

ImpactRx tracks what it calls New Written Prescriptions (NWRx), which are snapshots of physician behavior and promotion influences as they're happening. According to Nancy S. Lurker, CEO of ImpactRx, NWRx's are uncontaminated by managed care intervention and patient fulfillment issues and are the ultimate measure of physician behavior and, therefore, the purest measure of promotional effectiveness. Ms. Lurker was speaking at the recent 2nd Pharmaceutical Marketing Global Summit held February 24-26, 2004, in Philadelphia, PA.

ImpactRx has established an exclusive, longitudinal network of the nation's highest-prescribing physicians. This network contains just over 3000 MDs (a representative sample of the 30% of MDs who write 60% of all prescriptions). Each physician is provided with a personal digital assistant (PDA) and a laptop computer to transmit information immediately after each patient encounter.

Every day, physicians in their network transmit detailed information about promotional and patient encounters including non-identifiable information about patient treatment decisions (e.g., diagnosis, drug treatment and samples distributed). ImpactRx measures the number of prescriptions that are written for a product for a newly diagnosed patient or a change in treatment.

According to ImpactRx, capture of NWRx's provides pharmaceutical companies with the earliest insight possible—upstream of the pharmacy—into the impact of their promotion, helping them measure and modify the strategic decisions that drive market share growth.

Impact of DTC: the ED Marketplace

Data from ImpactRx presented at the Global Summit and at a March 11, 2004, evening seminar ("DTC Sweeps: The Impact and Evolving Role of Direct-to-Consumer Marketing") hosted by the Metro Chapter of

the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association (HBA), shed some light on the Erectile Dysfunction (ED) marketplace.

Pharmaceutical companies typically rely on dispensed prescription shares for everything from evaluating the effectiveness of promotional expenditures to monitoring the success of new products. However, there is a limitation associated with using dispensed prescription data, even dispensed new prescription data, for those types of analyses. In most therapeutic classes, especially classes involving chronic conditions, dispensed new prescription volumes are mostly continuations of existing therapies.

These continuation prescriptions contained in what is labeled "new" dispensed prescriptions, have a significant "masking" effect when trying to determine current winners and losers in a therapeutic class. Market shares calculated with pharmacy-based new prescription data reflect not

only the current shares of truly new treatment decisions, but also other complicated dynamics such as the percentage of prescription volume coming from those continuing therapy patients and the time between repeated "new" prescriptions in continued therapy.

Looking at ED market dispensed NRx shares (Fig. 1, next page) a pharmaceutical marketer might discern a trend showing Cialis gradually taking market share away from Viagra. However, how much of this data is due to newly written prescriptions vs. continuing therapy (renewals)?

The share of physicians' new treatment decisions can be significantly different from the share of "new" prescriptions recorded in our nation's pharmacies. How can a marketer gauge, for example, the effectiveness of DTC ads on the Super Bowl using these data?

Continues on next page... 

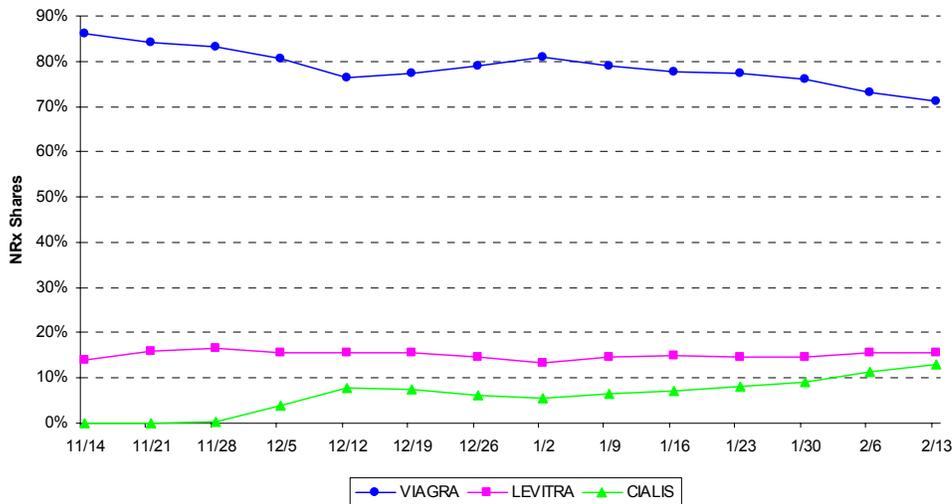


FIGURE 1: Dispensed NRx Shares, ED Market. Source: NDC Health

Through its technology-enabled network, ImpactRx is able to directly link the competitive promotional activity of the entire pharmaceutical industry to the prescriptions written by its physicians.

This is nicely illustrated by NWRx data for the ED marketplace as shown in Figure 2. The new written prescription share—as opposed to new dispensed prescriptions—indicates a real “Dog Fight” is developing among Cialis, Levitra, and Viagra.

Impact of PR: the Statin Marketplace

On March 8, 2004, a press release from ACC annual meeting in New Orleans announced results from the Pravastatin or Atorvastatin Evaluation and Infection Therapy (PROVE-IT) study, presented during a late-breaking clinical trials session at the meeting and published online the same day in the New England Journal of Medicine. The study showed that

atorvastatin (Lipitor®, Pfizer) 80 mg daily provided greater protection from death and cardiovascular events compared with pravastatin (Pravachol®, Bristol-Myers Squibb) 40 mg daily in patients recently hospitalized with acute coronary syndromes (ACS).

The very same day Pfizer issued a press release entitled “Significant Reduction in Heart Attacks Shown in Patients Taking Pfizer’s Lipitor.” The major news media reported the story as well. Almost immediately, PCPs in ImpactRx’s network began writing more new prescriptions for Lipitor (Fig. 3, next page). Surprisingly, however, this increase came at the expense of AstraZeneca’s Crestor®, whose NWRx share decreased proportionately. Pravachol’s share of NWRx remained about the same.

As reported in the Wall Street Journal on March 18, 2004 (“Lipitor Prescriptions Surge In Wake of Big

Continues on next page...

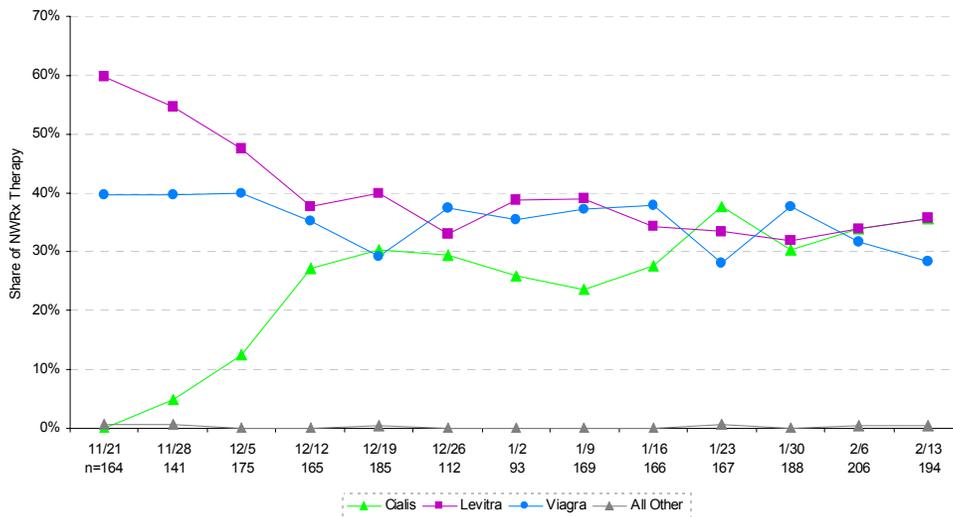


FIGURE 2: Share of NWRx Therapy, ED Market. Primary care physicians. Source: ImpactRx.

Study”), “many cardiologists and analysts thought both the high-powered drugs [Crestor and Lipitor] would benefit from the results.” Another event may have influenced doctors’ prescribing patterns those first few days of March, 2004. On March 4, 2004, the consumer-advocacy group Public Citizen petitioned the FDA to withdraw Crestor from the market because of potentially fatal side effects.

NWRx share data from cardiologists also showed an increase in Lipitor prescriptions written around the time that the PROVE-IT results were released (Figure 4). However, it appears that Zetia®, not Pravachol, proportionately lost share among cardiologists’ NWRx’s. Zetia, which is not a statin, is often prescribed in combination with statins to reduce cholesterol. The reason for this result is not known, but the availability of these data in “real time” allow

Zetia’s marketing and sales teams (Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals) to also react in real time.

ImpactRx’s real-time tracking of new written prescriptions give pharmaceutical companies an early indication of changes in physician prescribing behavior, which should allow them to better manage the efficiency and effectiveness of their sales and marketing efforts. It also provides news media and journalists with information they can use to report trends much more quickly than previously. How this will affect the use of PR in the pharmaceutical marketing mix remains to be seen.

Pharma Marketing News

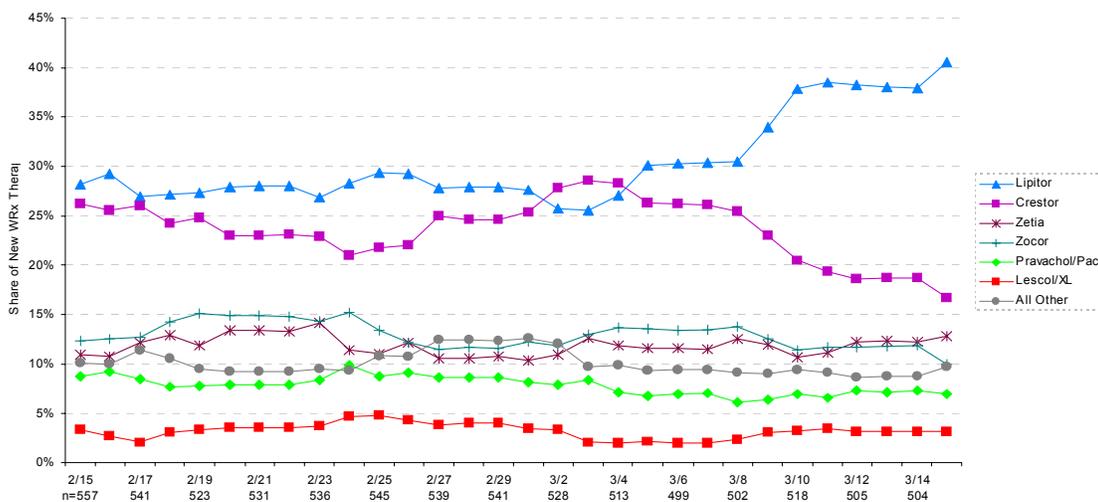
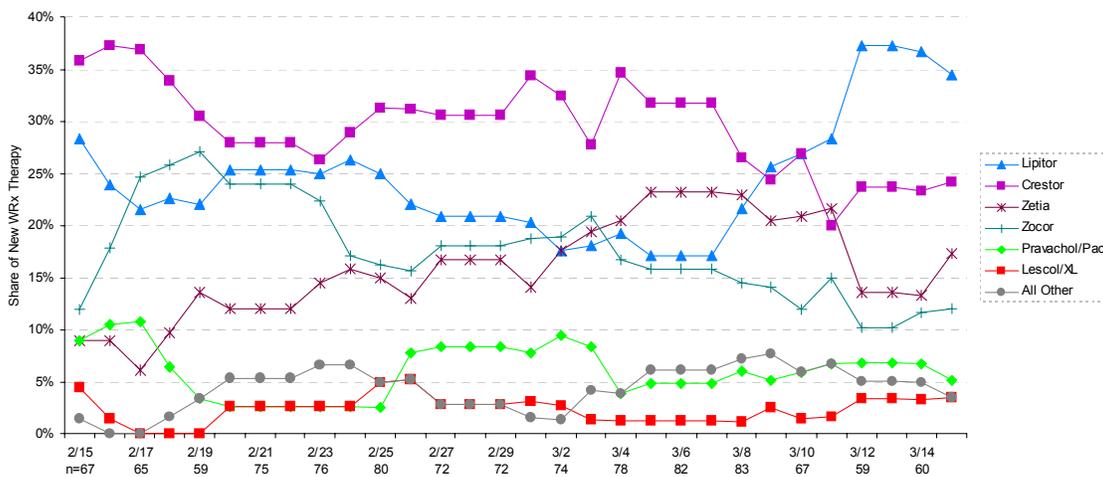


FIGURE 3: Share of New WRx Therapy, Selected Lipid-Lowering Drugs. Primary care physicians. Time period: rolling 7 days ending March 15, 2004. Source: ImpactRx.



Pharma Marketing News

Pharma Marketing News—the First Forum for Pharmaceutical Marketing Experts—is published monthly by **VirSci Corporation** except for August. It is distributed electronically by email and the Web to members of the Pharma Marketing Network (www.pharmamarketing.com).

VirSci Corporation specializes in pharmaceutical marketing intelligence and best practices, development of sponsored newsletters and other educational programs, and consulting in privacy and HIPAA. Our goal is to help our clients gain access to *their* clients and do business via the Internet more effectively, with greater return on

Publisher & Executive Editor**John Mack**

VirSci Corporation

www.virsci.com

PO Box 760

Newtown, PA 18940

215-504-4164, 215-504-5739 FAX

<mailto:editor@pharmamarketingnews.com>**Advisory Board****Jack Pfister**

Director, Business Development, Bruce Leeb & Company

Mark Schmukler

Managing Partner, Sagefrog Marketing Group, LLC

Harry Sweeney

Chairman, CEO, Dorland Global Health Communications

Richard Vanderveer, PhD

Chairman & CEO, V2

Subscribe to Pharma Marketing News

Pharma Marketing News (PMN) is the FREE monthly e-newsletter of the **Pharma Marketing Network**. Highlights are delivered to subscribers by e-mail. The full pdf version is available at www.pharmamarketingnews.com. You also have the option to participate in 2-way, peer-to-peer e-mail discussions with your pharmaceutical marketing colleagues through the **PHARMA-MKTING list**. By subscribing to PMN, you agree to receive e-mail messages through this service as well as newsletter highlights. We do not sell or share your personal information with third parties.

RED=REQUIRED INFORMATION

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

JOB TITLE: _____ COMPANY: _____

COUNTRY: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL FORMAT PREFERENCE: ___ HTML ___ TEXT ___ NONE

 I also wish to join the PHARMA-MKTING list to participate in 2-way peer-to-peer discussions.

SUBSCRIPTION OPTION: ___ FULL DISCUSSION ___ "LURK & LEARN" (DIGEST MODE)

BLACK=OPTIONAL INFORMATION (For our internal use only. We don't sell or rent mailing lists/labels)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE/PROV: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

 Mail or fax to: VirSci, PO Box 760, Newtown, PA 18940, 215-504-5739 (Fax)
