

NEW STUDY FINDS PARENTS EMBRACE ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S ASTHMA

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CYMFONY ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER ONLINE DISCUSSIONS REVEAL DISSATISFACTION WITH ASTHMA PHARMACEUTICAL TREATMENTS

Cymfony, a TNS Media Intelligence company, today reported that caregivers of children with asthma discuss non-pharmaceutical treatment options more than twice as often as the most-discussed type of asthma drug. Cymfony drew this conclusion from its study of over 15,000 posts on blogs, discussion boards, and social network sites written between October 2007 and April 2008 in which parents discussed treatment approaches for their child's asthma.

"Pharmaceuticals play a central role in treatment of children with asthma, but parents see them as only part of the solution to their child's condition," according to Csaba Dancshazy, the Cymfony analyst who authored the report. "Parents seek information on managing their children's lifestyle as well as alternative therapies to complement the action of the medication. To meet these caregivers' needs for a range of ways to help their child cope, drug companies may wish to increase efforts in patient education to become a valued information source and not just one treatment option among many in the market."

Other findings from the study indicate that parents are somewhat negative about most classes of asthma drugs, with inhaled corticosteroids being the exception. And while about one-third of these discussions take place on disease-specific or general medical sites, the majority takes place on sites with no medical content.

"There has been steady growth in use of the Internet for both informational needs and emotional support around management of chronic conditions," said Cymfony President Andrew Bernstein. "Pharmaceutical brand marketers need to understand the online context for patients and caregivers."

The 30-page study, "Treating Pediatric Asthma", is available for purchase from Cymfony and TNS Healthcare. More information on the study is available at www.cymfony.com/asthma.asp.

Separately, Cymfony announced the availability of the only syndicated social media tracking service specifically focused on asthma brands. The service aggregates discussion of 22 medications in 7 therapeutic categories from over 8000 social media sources including message forums, discussion groups and blogs. Pharmaceutical marketing professionals can subscribe to this data to understand brand perceptions as well as the issues associated with the diagnosis and treatment of the disease among patients and caregivers.

Cymfony's ongoing social media tracking platform can be used to gain a near real-time understanding of consumer issues, questions, and concerns about asthma. For example, brands can measure the impact of specific campaigns by tracking the presence of messaging and changes in conversation volume. Social media analysis complements research methodologies such as surveys and focus groups. TNS Healthcare's physician panels and other services can be used to explore findings of the syndicated study.