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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Sir/Madam:

Regarding the relatively recent consumer-directed (direct-to-consumer or DTC) broadcast advertisements for prescription drugs, I am very concerned for several reasons.

One, the decision to treat a disease/condition/symptom with a certain drug is being transferred from the doctor to the patient as I am certain there are many doctors who are easily convinced by their patient(s) to prescribe a drug that the patient believes will be effective according to their perception of the advertising. I do not believe that the typical consumer has more knowledge of which drug treatment should be used to treat a disease/condition/symptom than the physician whom the consumer has consulted.

Two, regarding the increasing cost of many prescription drugs – especially those under patent protection – I am very concerned that the huge television advertising costs incurred by the pharmaceutical industry will continue to escalate the prices of the drugs that are being advertised. As I am sure the FDA is aware, there are now many U.S. citizens that can not afford to purchase drugs that are prescribed by their physicians. Our Government should be doing all they can to lower the price of drugs, rather than allowing such increased prices.

If the main intent of DTC broadcast advertisements for prescription drugs is to inform the public of the availability of such drugs, then I believe we are sending a mixed message to our young population. On one hand, we preach "Don't do drugs," but on the other hand we openly advertise drugs to 1) make you feel better, 2) assist in weight loss, 3) make you look better, 4) help you perform better sexually, etc.

Print advertising of prescription drugs is directed to a better educated population than that of television advertising. Advertising a prescription drug in a magazine or journal emphasizes the side effects and drug interactions, whereas television advertising clearly emphasizes the desired effect of the drug.

Based on the above, I believe that the use of television to advertise prescription drugs should not be allowed.

Sincerely,

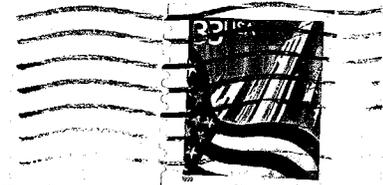
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