OTC Head Lice Control products in the US – Euromonitor Research Study

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- While established institutions still recommend pesticide treatments, consumers have increasingly moved toward natural products considered safer within OTC head lice control (LCP). Natural, pesticide-free and nontoxic are popular claims among successful brands, and these natural-positioned brands have grabbed share from traditional pesticide-based treatments.

- U.S. OTC lice-control treatment product retail sales, including kits but excluding combs or other accessories packaged and sold separately, were estimated at $144 million in 2016. They are forecast to grow on average 4.2% annually through 2021.

- Widespread concern about pesticide-resistant “super lice” has boosted growth in pesticide-free products. Products with the pesticide-free claim command the highest retail prices, as observed in store audits.

- Millennials have helped drive the surge in sales of products marketed as nontoxic through social media and word of mouth. This in turn has bolstered confidence in the effectiveness of natural solutions. For example, Licefreee introduced a larger size (12 oz) in addition to its standard size (6 oz) bottle to meet growing demand in 2015.

- Pharmacies like Walgreens have traditionally been the retailer of choice for LCP and continue to dominate retail distribution with their widespread availability and accessibility. Mass merchandisers like Wal-Mart (not their supercenters) are also easily accessible for busy urban consumers during the week and comprise the second-largest distribution channel.

- Industry experts say the ecommerce channel accounts for less than 10% of retail sales of LCP. However, it is growing fast as retailers like Amazon offer same-day delivery services. This suits panicked moms who want to address lice infestation on their children as quickly as possible.

- Online stores have grown in popularity, thanks to hyper-connected millennial moms. Many are even beginning to stock up on these products, according to interviews. Repeat purchases or moms frustrated by traditional treatments found to be ineffective are supporting online sales.

- While shampoo is still the predominant product format for LCP, newer formats like sprays and mousses grew the fastest during the historic period (2012-2016). Consumers are willing to try newer product formats after experiencing shampoo LCPs that didn’t solve the problem. However, it is important to note that shampoos are expected to continue to dominate product formats through 2021 because consumers most associate shampoo with LCP treatments.