

*The Truth*  *About Health*

---

## Market Drives Drug Company and Medical Device Combination Therapy!

### Volume 11 Issue 108

The introduction and use of drug-coated stents for coronary treatment procedures has been hailed by some as a medical breakthrough and by others as a dangerous product. A search of the Internet will reveal studies and opinions on both sides of the fence in terms of their safety and effectiveness. Some legal organizations are even advertising to generate lawsuits, hoping to find people who think they have been harmed by such devices.

Stents are tiny tubular implants that are used in conjunction with coronary difficulties to expand blood vessels, provide support and ease the flow of blood through an area. Metal stents were the device of choice before the introduction of drug-coated devices in 2002. These drug-line stents sell for approximately \$2,300 compared to the bare metal version that costs about \$700.

Medical device manufacturers and drug companies are aligning their forces to continue stent usage in the US market and to push them forward in Europe where sales and use lag behind the Americas. The global sale of treated stents is currently growing at about 11 percent annually, according to analysts at BCC Research. According to their calculations, these tiny implants will be generating sales worth \$8 billion US dollars by the year 2010.

The principal coatings available for uses in coronary arteries have been the chemotherapy drug Paclitaxel and the immunosuppressant drug Sirolimus, which help to prevent blockages of blood vessels. And regardless of the fact that there is controversy and the threats of lawsuits surrounding stents, the search continues for new medications to combine with these devices.

In fact, given the potential for financially lucrative rewards, the device manufacturing and drug production companies are expanding their plans to take this technology to more medical applications. Areas where large amounts of research dollars are being invested in drug/device combinations include:

- \* Catheters coated with antibiotics to prevent urinary tract infections.
- \* Bone cement containing antibiotics to reduce infection in hip implants.
- \* Transdermal Plasters applied to the skin to transport hormones directly into the body.
- \* Photo-dynamic cancer treatment designed to kill off tumor cells by the use of targeted light.

BCC Research estimates that the market for these four areas of combined application will be worth \$3.5 billion US dollars by the year 2010. Currently, combination drug/device therapy is seeing double-digit growth. Device safety and future good for the patient will need to be determined with each new or improved application. The hope is that the patient's health and welfare will be the overwhelming consideration in light of the staggering profit potential for drug makers and medical device manufacturers.

Source: Biotechnica Trade Fair for Biotechnology. September 2007.

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/September2007/04/c4894.html>