

Pharma firms expand focus on OTC segment

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Domestic pharma companies are planning big on over-the-counter (OTC) segment with new products and marketing campaigns. On Tuesday, Sun Pharmaceuticals launched an enhanced version of its top selling pain killer brand Volini spray and roped in tennis star Sania Mirza and Indian football team captain Sunil Chhetri as brand ambassadors.

Also competing for a pie of the ₹1,700-crore pain relief product market is Dr Reddy's, which launched its Nise-D pain killer spray on Monday. It says the association with sport stars is a reflection of rising trend of active lifestyle and interest in sports other than cricket.

The size of the OTC market is pegged at ₹13,000 crore and it is registering double-digit growth.

The space is crowded with firms marketing herbal and ayurvedic products and dietary supplements. Increasingly, pharmaceutical companies, which sold only prescription drugs are ramping up their portfolio. Earlier this year, Cipla secured investment from private equity firm Fidelity Growth Partners for its consumer health care business. Cipla is planning a foray in nutritional product segment next year.

"In the consumer health care space, we have five key brands and are in analgesics, health supplements and digestive remedies segment. Within these segments there is a significant potential. We have seen a very healthy growth," said Subodh Marwah, head, global consumer health care of Sun Pharma.

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