

Sandoz launches generic treatment for digestive disorders

Sandoz, the generic pharmaceuticals division of Novartis, has launched the first-to-market generic medicine for the treatment of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD).

GORD is a digestive system disorder that affects the lower oesophageal sphincter, the muscle connecting the oesophagus with the stomach. Other symptoms associated with GORD include asthma, chest pain and sleep disturbance.

Proton pump inhibitors (PPI), such as Sandoz's solution for heartburn are often the solution for sufferers who have tried other alternatives. The Sandoz solution for heartburn is effective in acid suppression.

Worldwide, lifestyle diseases are on the increase. In South Africa alone, more than 4.2 million boxes of prescription medicine for digestive system disorders are sold annually. Poor diet and a stressful lifestyle are contributing factors. Certain foods and beverages, including chocolate, citrus, fried or fatty foods, coffee or alcoholic beverages, may cause reflux and heartburn. In most cases, heartburn can be relieved through diet and lifestyle changes; however, some people may require medication daily or surgery to manage the disease.

"Lifestyle diseases, coupled with high costs make it increasingly difficult for South African patients to access affordable treatment for their healthcare problems. Medical aids often do not pay for medicines that treat gastro-oesophageal reflux disease, out of chronic benefits, therefore it is mostly funded out of the acute/savings portion of medical aids," says Carnie van der Linde Sandoz Country Head for South East Africa.

"This is an exciting time for Sandoz, we are increasing access for chronic sufferers of GORD who have been paying cash for medicines," says van der Linde.