

Consumers on the lookout for effective, easy-to-use solutions at pharmacies

By Michael Johnsen

The predominant factor impacting sales of the \$158.1 million parasite treatment category is super lice. But how do you treat cases of head lice that can't be eradicated through the use of traditional pediculicides? And more importantly, for parents it's how do you eliminate that "super lice" infestation without injuring the host, which just happens to be their children?

Super lice are certainly prevalent throughout the United States. The *Journal of Medicine Entomology* last reported that an average of 98% of head lice in 42 states have developed genetic mutations, making them resistant to permethrin, the active ingredient in OTC lice medications. But overall, super lice have been identified in 48 states, noted Joseph Juliano, VP of marketing analgesics, eye care and marketing services at Prestige Brands.

Each year, as many as 12 million sets of those parents come home to find their children frantically scratching at their heads due to a head lice infestation.

So what is the solution? Is it a matter of asking the doctor for a second-generation, prescription-only pediculicide because OTC products are no longer effective? Not necessarily. Parents still have good OTC options available at their local retail pharmacies. According to several manufacturers interviewed by *Drug Store News*. Parents are looking to their community pharmacists for solutions that work, are easy to apply and that address the whole problem, including prevention of re-infestation, they told *DSN*.

Parents need solutions that not only effectively eliminate super lice and their

eggs, but also facilitate easy comb-out of the nit, Juliano said. "Nits are very hard to remove. Consumers need something that makes it easy [and] pesticide-free — moms prefer products without pesticides for their children," he said.

And those solutions need to be easy to use, added Kelly Brodbeck, chief strategy officer at Larada Sciences. "[Parents want] something that works, [and] that works with a minimum of applications from a company that is truthful in its efficacy claims," he said. "Consumer purchase priorities are efficacy (it should work within the claimed time frame), value (they shouldn't need to buy more product), experience (it shouldn't be too long, be too messy or hard to apply the treatment) [and] price (it has to be affordable, generally less than \$30 per cure)."

Beyond eliminating lice, parents also are looking to prevent a re-infestation from within their own home — it can take as long as six weeks from the time parents are informed that their child may have been exposed to lice to the time those first telltale itching symptoms manifest. "Parents are looking for a complete solution that matches their newly educated perspective that pesticide-free is [an] effective and a viable alternative," said Amanda Sicvol, director of marketing and sales at TyraTech. "More than half of parents buying treatment products are looking for a product to clean their home simultaneously," she added. "Giving parents ancillary products to empower them in all aspects of lice management can broaden the target for the category, and increase buying occasions and basket ring for the retailer."



Parents are turning to their community pharmacies for effective OTC lice management solutions.

Top 10 parasite treatments

BRAND	SALES*	% SALES CHG	UNIT SALES*
Private label	\$40.5	-11.3%	-2.4
RID	39.5	-5.2	-0.6
Nix	24.4	-0.1	0.4
Licefreee	12.4	9.8	0.9
Nix Ultra	7.2	NA	4.2
Vamousse	7.0	-21.0	-1.0
Lice Shield	5.6	-16.0	-0.6
Reeses	4.3	-17.2	-0.5
LiceMD	4.1	-26.3	-0.8
LiceGuard RobiComb	3.8	-19.9	-0.5
TOTAL	\$158.1	-2.9%	NA

* In millions

Source: IRI for the 52 weeks ended May 14, Total U.S. multi-outlet (supermarkets, drug stores, mass market retailers, military commissaries and select club and dollar retail chains)

98% of head lice today are impervious to traditional pediculicide therapies, according to the *Journal of Medicine Entomology*.



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Resistance is futile

Manufacturers look to physical solutions to combat super lice

By Michael Johnsen

With more than 12 million outbreaks estimated to occur annually among preschool and school-aged children in the United States, lice infestations are a big deal. And pharmacists play a key role in helping parents select safe and successful treatments.

According to a whitepaper published earlier this year by TyraTech, makers of Vamousse, lice resistance to permethrin and synergized pyrethrins has limited the efficacy of OTC products containing these pesticides and engendered their misuse and overuse.

“The optimal treatment for pediculosis should act rapidly and reliably to eliminate live lice and eggs, and be easy to use, safe and affordable,” wrote Cheryl Krader, author of the whitepaper. “Over-the-counter agents are recommended as first-line intervention for pediculosis, and products containing pesticides that act chemically as neurotoxins have been used most commonly in the United States. However, those traditional treatments have fallen short of meeting the optimal treatment criteria with the advent of “super lice,” or lice that have developed a resistance to those neurotoxins. “The pesticide-based products have been associated with increasing failure rates that are attributed to high levels of genetic-based louse resistance and low efficacy for eliminating eggs,” she said.

In recent North American studies, strains of lice carrying genes for resistance to popular pediculicides ranged from 97.1% and 99.6% of lice. That has contributed to highly variable effectiveness rates of pesticide treatments between 45% and 80%.

Resistance and lower efficacy are compounded by the fact that subsequent pediculicide treatments cannot be reapplied until at least seven to as many as 10 days have passed. This increases the likelihood of spread-



Unit sales of pesticide-free, physical mode of action products for treating pediculosis rose from 31% to 41% of total branded product sales, according to a whitepaper written by Cheryl Krader for TyraTech, makers of Vamousse.

“The inconsistent efficacy and safety concerns associated with pesticide-based treatments for pediculosis are driving a need for alternative treatments. Products with a physical mode of action offer a high safety profile and are less susceptible to the development of resistance.”

Cheryl Krader, author, TyraTech whitepaper

ing the lice infestation if the first treatment proves ineffective.

“The inconsistent efficacy and safety concerns associated with pesticide-based treatments for pediculosis are driving a need for alternative treatments,” Krader concluded. “Products with

a physical mode of action offer a high-safety profile and are less susceptible to the development of resistance,” she added. “From 2014 to 2016, unit sales in the United States of such pesticide-free, physical mode of action products for treating pediculosis rose from 31% to 41% of total branded product sales.”



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¹Clinical trial conducted at Lice Source Services, Plantation, FL, Dec. 2015 ²As shown in lab studies



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Pesticide-free solutions

'Super lice' infestation products are populating the shelves

By Michael Johnsen

Parents and school nurses alike have expressed plenty of concern about super lice and how to treat these pesticide-resistant hair vermin safely, and most importantly, effectively. A number of OTC manufacturers have responded with product launches and offerings that effectively address ridding households of lice infestations.

One year ago, Prestige Brands launched its Nix Ultra Super Lice System that kills both traditional and super lice, as well as their eggs, without further contributing to pesticide-resistant strains of lice. "The combination of mineral oil and dimethicone provides optimal coating and coverage of both lice and hair, creating a slippery surface so lice and eggs, even those difficult-to-kill super lice, can be more easily removed by the Nix professional comb," said Tanya Remer Altmann, a fellow at the American Academy of Pediatrics.

TyraTech takes a different tack with its Vamousse Lice Treatment, which has been on the market since 2014, by robbing lice of moisture through its pesticide-free mousse-based product. Since it first hit the market, Vamousse has introduced three other products to round out the toolkit for parents, including two infestation-targeted products to treat children and the home, and a pediculicide repellent.

Boosting its new treatment product through a viral YouTube campaign, dubbed the "Lice Apocalypse," Lice Clinics of America in May brought to market a new kit that does it all — from killing the lice and detangling a child's hair to helping remove the dead lice and their eggs. "Our innovative and science-based solutions now offer consumers the ability to cure lice infestations at one of our urgent care clinics or in the comfort of their own home," said Claire Roberts, CEO of Lice Clinics of America. "And unlike other over-the-counter products, ours even smells good, which is a testament to our desire to provide a pleasant user experience in an unpleasant situation."

And as if head lice infestation and treatment and cleaning the house aren't stressful enough, there also is the fret over re-infestation. In response to that concern, TecLabs last year included its Licefreee Everyday! Shampoo as part of its lice kits. Consumers concerned about a re-infestation can use the shampoo in place of their regular daily shampoo.



TecLab's Licefreee! Kit

Tec Laboratories last fall introduced a new Licefreee Kit that includes a gel, a patented nit comb and a maintenance shampoo for use after the lice infestation.

Vamousse

Vamousse works with a physical mode of action — osmotic stress dehydration — rather than a chemical mode of action, allowing it to be effective against pesticide-resistant super lice strains.



Lice Clinics of America

Lice Clinics of America recently introduced a unique applicator that helps kill lice, detangle hair and facilitate the removal of dead lice and eggs all in one device.

Nix Ultra Super Lice System

Nix Ultra Super Lice System safely kills traditional and "super lice," as well as their eggs. One key advantage to the Nix Ultra 2-in-1 system is the quick-and-easy application — spread the solution on dry hair and let it sit for 15 minutes. The non-toxic and pesticide-free solution retails for a suggested price as high as \$24.99.



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