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'A Phenomenon' – Futura's Eroxon ED Gel Gets Off To Flying Start In The UK

by [David Ridley](#)

According to Futura's UK distributor, the recent launch of its Eroxon drug-free erectile dysfunction gel has been an outstanding success. Ceuta's Jon Connolly described the strategy behind the launch at a recent investor event.

[Futura Medical plc](#)'s drug-free erectile dysfunction gel has been flying off digital shelves faster than pharmacy chain Boots can restock it, according to the firm's UK distributor Ceuta Healthcare.

In the first five weeks after its launch in April, Eroxon sold at a rate of one every 30 seconds on boots.com, according to a press release issued by the retailer at the time, which Ceuta's marketing director Jon Connolly said was "just unheard of." (Also see "[Futura's Eroxon OTC Erectile Dysfunction Gel Gets UK Launch](#)" - HBW Insight, 20 Apr, 2023.)

Describing Eroxon's recent launch as a "phenomenon," Ceuta – which is distributing the product in the UK on behalf of Futura's UK and Europe commercialization partner Cooper Consumer Health – revealed that sales have now reached around the £2m (\$2.5m) mark.

Reflecting on the reasons for this success at recent Futura investor event, Connolly pointed to the three-pillar marketing strategy developed by Cooper Consumer Health's international marketing director Mark Berkhout, which he had adapted to the UK context. Two "keys to success" are developing credibility for Eroxon with healthcare professionals and driving consumer awareness.

In the UK, there existed what Connolly described as a "trust deficiency" with regards to Eroxon not just as a new product, but a new kind of ED treatment, which therefore does not have the prescription heritage of big brand pharmaceutical options like [Viatris Inc.](#)'s Viagra Connect (sildenafil) and [Sanofi](#)'s Cialis Together (tadalafil). RS153743

Competition within the UK's crowded ED market also comes from generic and lower cost sildenafil alternatives, including those marketed by [Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.](#), [Perrigo Company PLC](#) and Dr Reddy's, as well supplement-based wellness products like Idavøll. (Also see "[Viatris Welcomes 'Healthy Competition' For UK OTC Erectile Dysfunction Top Spot](#)" - HBW Insight, 4 Oct, 2021.) (Also see "[Teva UK Enters Erectile Dysfunction Category With First Ever Rx-To-OTC Switch](#)" - HBW Insight, 19 Oct, 2021.) (Also see "[UK's Idavøll Viking-Themed Supplement Seeks To Conquer Men's Sexual Wellness Category](#)" - HBW Insight, 13 Mar, 2023.)

"We can't just turn up and expect to sell like hotcakes when nobody's heard of us," Connolly said. Therefore Ceuta's first job was to "focus on closing that gap as quickly and as effectively as we can."

PR Impact

Thanks to help from marketing firm Jungle Cat Solutions, Ceuta was able to use PR effectively, inviting the media, including HBW Insight, to a mysterious event in London to hear an "all-star cast" of key opinion leaders, including men's health specialist Dr Jeff Foster, discussing the "latest research around a major bedroom saboteur" and "the very latest clinically backed innovation discoveries."

This led to headlines in the mainstream press like "New erectile dysfunction gel that works in 10 minutes" – highlighting a key unique selling point of Eroxon versus sildenafil and tadalafil, its faster onset of action, according to clinical research – and "New Viagra-style gel hits shelves as experts hail the cream as a game changer for erectile dysfunction." (Also see "[Futura All Set For US FDA De Novo Application For Eroxon OTC ED Treatment](#)" - HBW Insight, 4 Oct, 2022.)

"The PR was phenomenal," Connolly commented. "Those headlines just had potency that you would never, ever be able to get in advertising because they just wouldn't be allowed."

Working with Boots, which Connolly said was of "paramount importance" when planning the launch, has enabled Ceuta to also combine credibility and consumer awareness with Cooper's third key to success – accessibility – into its UK-specific launch strategy,

"For over 30 years I've been saying to clients that Boots is the second most trusted health brand in the UK, with the number one brand being the National Health Service," Connolly claimed. "What you tend to find with consumers is that if you associate yourself with Boots then that trust kind of bleeds into you like osmosis."

Being the second most trusted health brand also means that ED sufferers and their sexual partners know where the nearest Boots store is, which means that "if you can create the demand, then they know where to get it," Connolly pointed out.

Med Device Advantage

On Boots shelves, thanks to its classification as an OTC medical device, Eroxon sits alongside other sexual wellness products like Reckitt's Durex condoms – an option not open to “pharmacy” (P) classified medicines like sildenafil and tadalafil, which can only be dispensed after consultation with a pharmacy professional.

However, to make sure that Eroxon is also part of that pharmacy consultation, Ceuta has negotiated with Boots that Eroxon is also placed “behind the counter” alongside Viagra Connect and Cialis Together. For pharmacy professionals, Eroxon provides an alternative recommendation option for consumers who, for example, can't take these drugs because of interactions, or who do not want to side effects associated with PD5 inhibitors.

For consumers that want discretion, Eroxon is also available on Boots.com and Amazon. Eroxon has done well on Boots.com, according to Connolly, helped, he said, by the retailer placing the product “loud and proud” in the middle of its homepage during the first week.

Amazon: Incredible Reach

Meanwhile, Amazon's reach with consumers is “just incredible,” Connolly enthused, with around four out of five UK consumers having an active account.

“If a someone wants to buy Eroxon on Amazon, their credit card details and delivery addresses are already there, and they know it's going to turn up in a nice discreet brown box as opposed to something with erectile dysfunction product written all over it.”

“So, these two we just saw as being a sort of a dream partnership as far as the accessibility piece was concerned.”

Online provided the majority of sales during the first phase of Ceuta's UK marketing campaign, Connolly revealed.

While physical sales were “kind of slow” at first, a second phase centered on a TV advert provided a much needed boost to footfall, he explained. “TV has driven a 500% uplift,” Connolly reported. “We got a million pounds worth of sales in six weeks.”

“It's early days,” Connolly added. “But at this particular stage, it's way beyond ours and Cooper's expectations.”

US Opportunity

Futura is also looking to launch Eroxon in the US, where it recently gained approval from the Food and Drug Administration via its De Novo regulatory pathway, used to classify novel medical

devices for which there is no legally marketed predicate product.

Approval is contingent on general controls alone, or paired with special controls, providing reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness for the intended use. (Also see "[ED Indication Reaches US OTC Market With FDA Approval Of UK Firm Futura's Eroxon Gel](#)" - HBW Insight, 20 Jun, 2023.)

Unlike in the UK, in the US there are currently no OTC drug-based options for ED, although Sanofi is attempting to switch Cialis there as well.

The firm's attempt to reclassify Cialis hit a stumbling block when its planned actual use trial to support OTC use of Cialis was placed on clinical hold by the US FDA in May 2022 "due to matters surrounding the protocol design. (Also see "[Delay For Sanofi's OTC Cialis Study In US Could Be Sign of Hurdles Holding Back Other Switches](#)" - HBW Insight, 31 May, 2022.)

A year later, the company continues to work with FDA to progress its application. Van Ongevalle said on a recent earnings call that Sanofi is "advancing on the execution of our strategy to lift the clinical hold and including the generation of the necessary data that was requested."

Sanofi is hoping its delayed program to switch Cialis in the US can learn lessons from the upcoming OTC launch of the erectile dysfunction treatment in the UK. (Also see "[Sanofi Hopes UK Cialis Launch Will Illustrate US Switch Potential](#)" - HBW Insight, 3 May, 2023.)

According to CEO Paul Hudson, "The UK launch is quite important for getting a sense of what the over-the-counter opportunity could be and the appetite [in the US]."

"I think the UK experience will be a good bellwether to what the market opportunity could be of scale to the size of the US," Hudson commented. "So, that's good. That's exciting."