

The Grocer

Focus On: Healthcare & supplements by Kathy Oxtoby (kathyoxtooby@blueyonder.co.uk)

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The Story

The ageing population is doing wonders for Britain's healthcare and supplements market, it would seem. As older consumers take an increasing interest in their health, 50 plus multivitamins are steaming ahead to become as the nation's fastest growing vitamin, worth £15m in their own right. Other vitamins aren't doing badly, either. Growing awareness of vitamin D deficiency has delivered yet another double-digit increase in sales, and herbal supplements are also on the up. So what's behind this growth?

Key Themes:

Over 50s: The value of the 50 Plus Multivitamin market has soared 42%. What is behind this? Is it just an ageing population? Or are older consumers taking increasing care of themselves to keep young?

Herbal remedies: According to newspaper reports, an increasing number of consumers are turning to the 'Natural Health Service'. That could explain the stellar rise in herbal supplements, up 19.6% in value. Which herbal supplements are proving most popular and for which conditions?

Out with the traditional: Despite this appetite for more natural remedies, sales of traditional supplements such as cod liver oil and garlic are down. Why?

Premium pregnancy: Pregnancy multivitamins value sales are up 17.4%, partly boosted by an 8.8% rise in prices. How are brands and retailers justifying the extra cost, and why are consumers willing to pay it?

Diet pills: In a subsector ruled by paid celebrity endorsements and social media fads, what is the latest big thing in diet pills? Who is selling what, and which diet pills have fallen by the wayside since last year?

Own Label vs Brand: Brands and own label have both seen growth this year, though brands are outgrowing OL in multivitamins, who have collectively gained an additional 395k shoppers this year. How are brands managing this?

Retailers: This feature will investigate the various strategies of retailers in the category, how they have evolved and how they will develop in the coming year. We look at the high rates of growth enjoyed in hard discounters and bargain stores, and the factors driving this.

Innovation: This will be key to this feature. We will be investigating how new product development has shaped the category over the past year and what is in store for shoppers in 2018. We will be profiling four of the most interesting launches in a separate innovation panel.

Promotions: Promotions, particularly multibuy deals, are of huge importance to this market. This feature will explore how the promotional strategies of retailers and brands have changed over the past year. Attention will be paid to the promotional strategies of retailers and how this has affected average prices, and of course sales and buying patterns, over the past year.

Key questions the feature is likely to address:

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What's next for the category?