

Medco plans to compare Plavix, Effient in study

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(AP) -- Medco Health Solutions Inc. said Tuesday it will compare the blood thinner Plavix, the world's second-best selling drug, with the newer Effient.

Medco's proposed study, which would take more than two years, will exclude patients with a genetic mutation that reduces the effectiveness of [Plavix](#) and other drugs. Plavix is less expensive than Effient and will be vulnerable to low cost generic competition in late 2011, and Medco said customers could save money if the study shows Plavix is more effective.

Plavix is sold by Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. of New York and French drugmaker Sanofi-Aventis, while Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly & Co. markets Effient.

About 25 percent of people cannot metabolize Plavix effectively due to a genetic mutation, and Medco plans to exclude those patients from its study. It said genes do not have as much of an effect on Effient.

Medco is a pharmacy benefits manager, and handles benefits for plan operators and members. For Medco, sales of generic drugs are more profitable than higher priced brand name products.

The Franklin Lakes, N.J., company plans to test the drugs on more than 14,000 patients with acute heart disease, and evaluate rates of death due to heart problems, heart attacks, and stroke over a six month period. It plans to begin enrolling patients this fall. The study will end in mid-2011

and data will be presented early in 2012, Medco said.

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