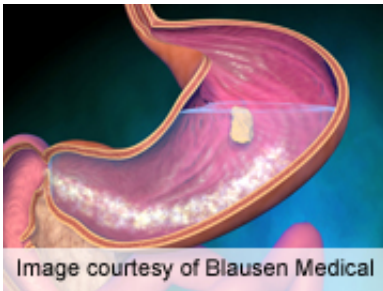


DDW: Gastroenterologists missing chances to shift to generic meds

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(HealthDay)—Although most gastroenterologists feel that store-brand and branded treatments are equivalent, most continue to recommend branded products for gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and chronic constipation, according to two studies presented at the annual Digestive Disease Week, held from May 3 to 6 in Chicago.

Amanda Guentner, M.D., from the University of Michigan Health System in Ann Arbor, surveyed 830 gastroenterologists about their perceptions and practices regarding store-brand versus branded over-the-counter (OTC) medications for GERD. The researchers found that 72 percent of gastroenterologists felt that there was equal bioequivalence for store-brand and branded [proton pump inhibitors](#) (PPIs), and 76 percent felt that their effectiveness was equivalent. However, more than 30 percent of the time 54 percent of gastroenterologists recommended a

branded OTC PPI to patients with typical GERD symptoms. The [cost savings](#) associated with store-brand versus branded treatments were underestimated by gastroenterologists.

In a second study, Guentner and colleagues examined utilization of store-brand and branded OTC and prescription medications for [chronic constipation](#) in a survey of 830 gastroenterologists. The researchers found that, although 90 percent of gastroenterologists felt that store-brand and branded polyethylene glycol laxatives were equally effective, only 40 percent of gastroenterologists always or often encouraged their patients to purchase store-brand laxatives. The cost savings associated with store-brand laxatives were underestimated by [gastroenterologists](#).

"At a time when doctors are highly constrained in their use of prescription medicines for so-called lifestyle conditions like GERD and constipation, treatment of these conditions is going to shift more and more to the OTC space," a coauthor on both studies said in a statement.

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