

Jazz still FAAH from replacing Xyrem



Joanne Fagg

Shrewd deals are key when a company faces looming generic competition for its lead product, but the subject of today's transaction between Jazz and Springworks looks like a long shot. Jazz has acquired global rights to PF-04457845, a FAAH inhibitor, and wants to develop it for post-traumatic stress disorder; this class has been a developmental dead end so far. To Jazz's credit it is being cautious by handing over just \$35m up front, and the deal is heavily backend loaded. PF-04457845 originated at [Pfizer, and was offloaded to Springworks in 2017](#) a year after Bial's FAAH inhibitor [BIA 10-2474 was linked with haemorrhagic and necrotic brain lesions](#). The issue with Bial's asset looks to have been caused by [off-target activity on several lipases](#), while PF-04457845 is said to be more selective. Safety aside, several other FAAH inhibitors have failed in indications including osteoarthritis, cancer pain and neuropathic pain, and just two others appear to be in development. Jazz needs new avenues for growth as its blockbuster narcolepsy drug, Xyrem, is set to lose patent protection in 2023. This might not be the deal that investors were hoping for.

The FAAH inhibitor clinical pipeline (all phase II)

Product	Company	Note
JNJ-42165279	Johnson & Johnson	Study in autism ongoing, primary completion 2022, NCT03664232
PF-04457845	Jazz/ Springworks	\$35m up-front payment from Jazz, development planned in PTSD (Yale running a trial in cannabis use disorder, NCT03386487)
V158866	Vernalis/ Neuritek	Deal signed earlier this year, plan to develop for PTSD & other CNS diseases

Sources: EvaluatePharma, clinicaltrial.gov, company releases.

Jazz's biggest-selling drugs by 2026

Product	Therapy area	Annual sales (\$m)		Status
		2019	2026e	
Sunosi	Narcolepsy	4	451	Marketed
Xywav	Narcolepsy	-	420	Approved
Xyrem	Narcolepsy	1,643	287	Marketed
Zepzelca	Small cell lung cancer	-	277	Marketed
Vyxeos	Acute myeloid leukaemia	121	256	Marketed
Erwinaze	Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	177	156	Marketed
Defitelio	Hepatic veno-occlusive disease	173	152	Marketed
JZP-458	Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia	-	33	Phase III

Source: EvaluatePharma.

