

Suppliers

Organobalance buys back probiotic from Lonza



By Annie-Rose Harrison-Dunn† 18-Feb-2016

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German firm Organobalance has reacquired the licence for the probiotic product Pylopass from Swiss company Lonza.

Lonza bought the rights to the product from Organobalance back in April 2011 – marking its first delve into the probiotics market.

It said at the time the move was part of its strategy to broaden its nutrition portfolio and enter the probiotic market, which it called *"a market with vast growth potential"*.

Yet now Lonza has returned the licence to the biotechnology research and development company Organobalance after *"restructuring its product portfolio"*.

It is claimed the product currently marketed as Pylopass, based on *Lactobacillus reuteri* DSM17648, helps fight *Helicobacter pylori* by binding with the *Helicobacter* microbes before they are 'flushed' from the stomach naturally.

Speaking with NutraIngredients, Organobalance commercial director Gilles Jequier said it now planned to continue investment in clinical studies and move deeper into the pharma market.

In September Jequier moved from working as Pylopass global product manager for Lonza over to OrganoBalance to continue to develop the Pylopass market.

He declined to comment on why Lonza had dropped its first foray into probiotics.

Organobalance would be keeping the brand name Pylopass, which Jequier said was a "strong asset" given most clients had adopted co-branding on packs.

Founded in 2001, Organobalance now employs around 35 employees across its offices in Berlin and Flensburg, Germany.

15% of infected get ulcers

H. pylori is a bacteria found in the sticky mucus that lines the stomach. About 40% of people in the UK have it, according to the UK's National Health Service (NHS).

While about 90% of those do not experience any problems, about 15% of the infected get ulcers either in the stomach (gastric ulcer) or in the small intestine's duodenum (duodenal ulcer).

The germ has also been linked to a slight increase in the risk of stomach cancer, although treating *H. pylori* simply to reduce this risk would be ineffective, according to NHS advice.

Gathering science

Organobalance says the probiotic offers an alternative to antibiotics often prescribed to those suffering symptoms of *H. pylori* infection.

Christine Lang, Organobalance managing director and professor of microbiology and molecular genetics at the TU Berlin, said: "In contrast to conventional treatment with antibiotics, patients can be treated more conservatively while protecting the natural microflora."

It pointed to the stimulation of acid by the probiotics as the main mechanism for the purported effects but said no “*exhaustive data*” was available due to poor study design.

The review published in the journal *Gastroenterology Clinics of North America* called for more multicenter, high-quality, double-blind, randomised controlled trials to explore the potential of the most promising strain, *Lactobacillus reuteri*.

Making claims

However such claims cannot be made on food supplement packs without a claim approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which Jequier confirmed neither company had filed for.

“We have no plan to file a claim in the short term,” he said.

EFSA is currently evaluating an article 14 health claim from Greece-based Chios Mastiha Growers Association stating: *“Chios Mastiha contributes to the reduction of Helicobacter pylori which is a risk factor for the development of stomach ulcers.”*

Chios mastiha is a plant resin from the mastic tree used as a traditional medicine.