

## **No Failure in Clinical Trials, Claims Pharma Exec**

by Ed Barks, Special to *The Daily Bugle*

Pharmaceutical giant XYZ Therapies is not quite running on all cylinders. Approval for its new weight loss drug, Burn Baby Burn, has proven “a little more difficult than people had predicted,” according to John Jones, the company’s Chief Financial Officer.

“I don’t know that we have any shortfalls in our clinical trials,” he continues. “If I could improve something, I think I would improve our time to market with our products.”

Patient advocates are beginning to grumble about XYZ’s speed to market, particularly given last year’s acquisition of 123 Biology. “We’re doing what we can as fast as we can to integrate our differing cultures,” Jones notes.

“It put a little delay in us really getting FDA approval as fast as we might,” the CFO says of the purchase. “Sure, the time spent aligning 123’s product line has, to some degree, distracted us.”

“In hindsight, I wish we could have made the acquisition a little earlier,” he laments. “That’s the only thing I’d say I’d like to see us execute better, is our time to market with the therapies.”

As for XYZ’s niche, Jones describes it by launching into a jargon-laced romp: “We’ve been in the fat absorption inhibitor space from the early days of the appetite suppressant therapies.” He returns to earth to explain, “We were actually the first pharmaceutical company to dedicate our efforts to this area of patient need.”

He depicts the firm’s mission as “enabling physicians and patients to better manage their health more effectively through cutting edge therapies.”

Jones professes little concern about main rival, Trim My Fat, Inc. “I don’t think we’re playing catch up with them,” he claims. “We may be catching up to them in terms of the marketing because I think they have hyped their product a little more than we have.”

“They’re trying to update their product line with more state-of-the-art manufacturing processes and we’re already there.”

“I think people don’t realize that XYZ does \$999 million in revenue, so it’s actually a bigger player than any of the Acme Meds or Timothy Leary Pharmaceuticals,” he says. “We’ve been in this space for more than a decade.”

“We have been profitable for years,” Jones says of the company as a whole. What about profits for Burn Baby Burn specifically? “We do not report separately.”

Future trends bode well, he believes. Although XYZ has conducted no original research into the question, he cites a magazine article from an unnamed publication that predicted the market for weight loss drugs is “going to grow by 50 percent over the next five years. Well, 50 percent is a pretty nice growth curve in any business.”