

Text of e-mail sent by Skip Weber: I understand that the gap between celebrex and vioxx is widening again. I have been told that scripts are now 56% to 44% and total market share over the last month is 64% to 36%. This is primarily due to two recent events:

1) The now combined sales forces of Searle, Pfizer, and Pharmacia & Upjohn have begun to push back against the huge [marketing](#) campaign Merck has waged over the last 6 months.

2) Merck recently released a study that revealed a 5% increase in heart attacks for people taking vioxx. Merck has recommended that people taking vioxx also take at least two aspirin per day. Bad news for vioxx since niaspids are what vioxx replaced. In another unrelated event, an appeals court has just stated that Merck should not have been issued a patent for vioxx since it infringed on the patent filed by Searle 7 months earlier. This will continue to be fought in the courts.

In 2000, celebrex has an advantage and that appears to be fairly steady. As far as total sales in 1999 and 2000, Celebrex just surpassed 2 billion. Vioxx has yet to hit one billion but will certainly hit a billion in the next month. While vioxx appears to be catching celebrex, and they may some day because they have a terrific sales force, the total dollar value of market share is widening. There is also a new arthritis drug hitting the market that may take as much a 5% of the market, according to my [marketing](#) friends.

There is also a patent infringement suit against Pharmacia that could hit Pharmacia Merck hard if it is upheld. I have been told that there is two reasons why Pharmacia was sued but not Merck. If Rochester U. beats Pharmacia, they have beaten Merck. Battling Pharmacia will be a less expensive battle than going against Merck's big legal guns. Also, it has been said the Merck is one of the major benefactors of Rochester U."