

# Sloan Trends

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## Getting Ahead of the Curve: Kids & Heart Health

By Dr. A. Elizabeth Sloan

The advent of risk factors in children/teens for serious health conditions—and their increasing recognition by parents, health professionals and the media—are driving a new, diverse and fast-emerging market opportunity as yet untapped by the functional food and dietary supplement industries. Although parents are grappling with several health issues today, it will likely be heart health—America’s #1 health concern—that leads the way into the kid’s condition-specific segment. One in eight children already have two or more risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD), 10% of teens have high cholesterol, and the incidence of

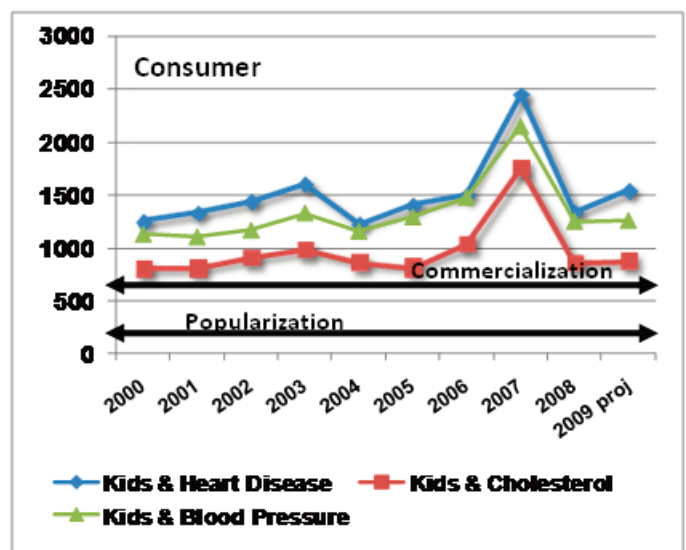
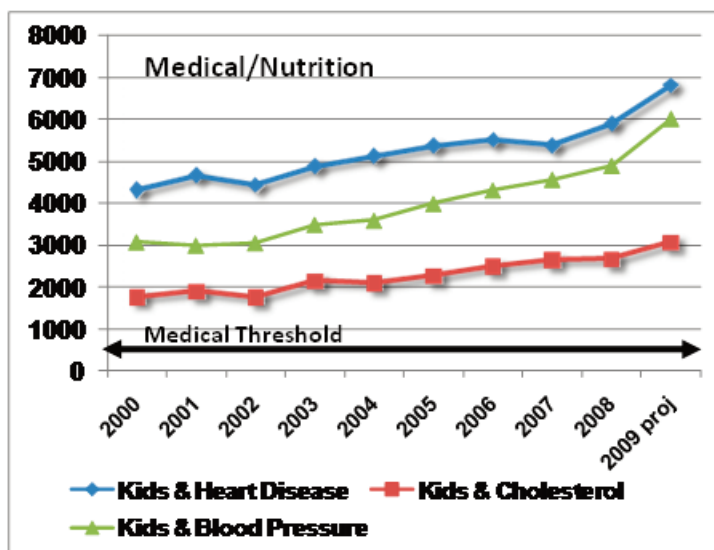
high blood pressure (HBP) in children has nearly tripled over the past decade.

### Market Potential

According to Sloan Trends’ TrendSense model, kids’ heart health, followed by blood pressure and cholesterol, have quietly become sustainable, long-term U.S. mass-market opportunities and, with continuing growth in medical/nutrition research activity, they’re poised for acceleration.

As evidenced by a significant increase in the Medical “kids and blood pressure” trend line in 2004, “Trends in Blood Pressure among Children and Adolescents” appeared in the May issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Assn.* The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) quantified the rise in blood pressure in children and released new diagnostic procedures and standards in its “4th Report on High Blood Pressure Education Program.” Another noteworthy increase occurred in 2007, when a new NHLBI report, an article in the American Heart Association (AHA) journal *Circulation*, and an article in the *Washington Post* brought kids’ heart disease risk factors to the forefront and confirmed child hypertension as a “major public health problem.” Also, in Dec. 2007, the American Academy of

## TrendSense: Kids & Heart Health Trends



Source: Sloan Trends, Inc., 2009

\* Although there are many factors that go into determining consumer trends, measuring how medical/nutrition activity levels have risen over the past decade, as well as some of the key milestones that have occurred and how these issues have been understood and embraced by the public are essential in predicting the sustainability of the Consumer trend line.

Pediatrics (AAP) made blood pressure screening part of a child's annual exam at age 3. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), which sued the FDA in 2005 to reduce the sodium level in foods, finally saw hearings by FDA officials in 2007. AHA confirmed heart disease risk was established at an early age and that lower fat diets could help reduce cholesterol in children. The culmination of these major events resulted in a large boost in the Consumer TrendSense trend line in 2007.

### **Growth Opportunities**

- Obesity rates are increasing: the rate of premature heart disease in obese teens is set to triple; increased incidence of HBP in children is the major culprit.
- New AHA recommendations were released for use of noninvasive tools, e.g. (ultrasound, to identify onset of CVD in children).
- 55% of parents are extremely/very concerned about protecting their child against diseases in later life (e.g., heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes) reports HealthFocus; now #6 on parents list of health concerns for children.
- NHLBI will be releasing evidence-based integrated cardiovascular risk reduction pediatric guidelines within the next year.

**Functional Foods & Beverages:** Dietary intervention and exercise are the first steps used by health professionals. Foods that help reduce risk factors naturally, such as low fat dairy, soyfoods, whole grain ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals/breads (especially oatmeal) and products naturally high in omega 3 fatty acids/antioxidants will have an initial advantage. In 2007, AHA and NHLBI concurred that low fat products can safely lower cholesterol levels in kids over age 4 without risk to development. Reformulating kids' foods to be more nutrient dense—and lower in fat, calories, sugar, and sodium—is another strong direction. Ironically, the new “low in” foods aimed at children have been declining. Notably, Americans are most aware of (55%) and have the highest degree of trust for (50%) the AHA “Heart Check” Symbol—an easy way for parents to identify a heart-friendly kids' food.

**Dietary Supplements:** AAP recommends considering statin use as young as 8 years old in children with high LDLs; AHA not until age 10. Supplements can play a positive role in ensuring children's heart health, serving as a more natural alternative to drugs in reducing cholesterol or high blood pressure. Some supplement marketers (e.g., Hero Yummi Bears DHA

Dietary Supplement with Fruit Flavor) are flagging a “supports healthy heart function” positioning in their children's vitamins line. And a Centrum-like heart formula specifically for kids may find a niche in lieu of medication. European and Asian cholesterol lowering milks, yogurts, drinks and shots; high magnesium milks; and supplements formulated with beta-glucans, plant sterols, CoQ10 and dairy peptides (e.g., AmealPeptide from Calpis and TensGuard from DSM) are other important approaches.

### **References furnished upon request.**

**About the author:** *Dr. A. Elizabeth Sloan is president of Sloan Trends, Inc., Escondido, CA, which is a consulting firm that offers trend-tracking and predictions, strategic counsel, and business-building ideas for food, supplement and pharmaceutical marketers. Each month she will provide analysis and discuss opportunities of a particular market being covered in a given issue. Since this issue's focus is children's nutrition, Dr. Sloan chose to analyze the kids' heart health market. In the November issue, she'll be discussing the market potential for emerging marine ingredients.*

**SLOAN TRENDS' TRENDSENSE** is a 15-year-old trend tracking system, which identifies and quantifies trends as well as predicts the optimal timing, sustainability and life-cycle stage of ingredients, terms, product opportunities and related market issues.

The model displays medical and consumer “activity levels” based on a comprehensive analysis of five critical sources of information—consumer, trade and competitive, legal and regulatory and media coverage. The resulting charts give insight into the market's changing health issues and concerns, the ingredients that are up-and-coming and those that have just about run their course, as well as what health claims, marketing messages and products will bring your company the most success.

- **Emerging Phase** = Trends begin to appear on the radar screen. Companies should begin to collect literature and market details for those that exhibit continual growth and that might be of interest.
- **Popularization Phase** = Medical/Nutrition crossover to consumer media and marketplace; opportunity for niche or specialty markets. Marketers/manufacturers should begin a detailed evaluation of the supporting marketing and scientific data and determine if this term/trend offers a good strategic fit and is appropriate to pursue. Appropriate product development procedures should be undertaken.
- **Commercialization Phase** = Mass-market ready. Mainstream consumers have a significant degree of familiarity with the term/trend and there is opportunity for competitive advantage by getting out ahead of the competition or by providing a unique and highly innovative product positioning for success.