



Is There a Pill for Covid-19?

Almost 30 months after the initial outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the world appears to be finally adjusting to life after Covid. Of course, the development of viable vaccination candidates has been instrumental in bringing the disease under control, with US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer playing a key role in the research.

But whereas the lion's share of research has concentrated on mitigating the symptoms of Covid-19 via a pre-emptive intravenous injection of the drug, Pfizer has also been working hard on an antiviral treatment for those experiencing a milder form of the disease in pill form. The fruits of their labour, Paxlovid, is enjoying huge popularity around the globe, boosting the company's profits in the process.

Pfizer at the forefront

Developing a viable vaccine is a process which normally takes years, if not decades, to complete. However, the deployment of modern research techniques such as [visible spectroscopy to develop mRNA vaccines](#) meant that companies like Pfizer were able to achieve the feat within a matter of months.

With their products now approved for all age groups other than the under 5s – and with research ongoing into the safety and efficacy of inoculating those youngsters – Pfizer have turned their attention to other means of treatment. Specifically, this has taken the form of Paxlovid, a pill that can be swallowed to combat the symptoms of Covid-19.

The popularity of Paxlovid

In the first quarter of 2022 alone, Paxlovid sales reached a staggering \$1.5 billion. However, that figure will represent a mere drop in the ocean if projections prove accurate, with Pfizer estimating that they will sell some 120 billion pills worth \$22 billion across 2022. The pill has already received the regulatory green light from more than 40 countries worldwide, while the World Health Organisation (WHO) has given it a ringing endorsement as well.

Pfizer were also quick to downplay the so-called “rebound risk” that has surfaced in select customer cases. After ingesting the pills, some patients have reported experiencing a renewed surge in symptoms, though the rarity of the occurrence has prompted Pfizer to suggest that the rebound is being caused by peculiarities in the patient's DNA rather than the drug itself.



A profitable year for Big Pharma

Having shipped over 3.4 billion doses of its intravenous vaccine to almost 180 countries around the globe, Pfizer has posted big profits this year and last. It has already enjoyed a 77% boost in revenues in the first quarter of this year, taking in \$25.7 billion so far, and expects to enjoy annual turnover of \$100 billion, which is a 23% increase from 2021.

That boom in profits relies mainly on its vaccine and therapeutic product portfolio, but the increasing demand for Paxlovid will also contribute to the healthy bank balance of the company. At the same time, Pfizer refuse to rest on their laurels and are continuing research into a booster vaccine which can be taken just once a year to increase the comfort and convenience of living with Covid-19.