

# Weight loss drugs facing scrutiny in the U.S.

With obesity on the rise, drug makers have long sought a pill that can suppress appetite and be marketed to the masses. But those that have reached the market or the final stages of vetting have repeatedly been sidelined by side effects

## DRUGS UP FOR APPROVAL

■ **Sep 15, 2010:**

FDA advisory panel evenly split on whether **Meridia** – sold by **Abbott Laboratories** and linked to cardiovascular problems – is too dangerous to stay on market



■ **Oct 22:** FDA to make final decision on **lorcaserin** (brand name **Lorquess**) – made by **Arena Pharmaceuticals**, which blocks appetite signals in brain. **FDA analysis found drug works only “by slim margin” and raised concerns about memory loss and tumours in lab rats**

■ **Oct 28:** FDA to decide whether to approve **Qnexa**, made by **Vivus Inc.** It contains appetite suppressant **phentermine** and anti-seizure drug **topiramate**. Phentermine was previously used in combination known as **fen-phen**, linked to heart and lung problems and banned in 1997

■ **Dec 7:** FDA to review **Contrave**, made by **Orexigen Therapeutics**, which combines **naltrexone** – used to fight alcohol and drug addiction – and antidepressant **bupropion**

