News release

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Survey reveals the dangers of using illicit websites to buy medicines

A new survey from ITV's Daybreak and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) reveals that 99% of pharmacists think that patients who use prescription-only medicines bought from illegal websites are putting their lives at risk.

The survey shows more than half of the 2,500 pharmacists who took part have themselves come across a patient who has admitted using such websites and a third have seen a rise in patients obtaining prescription-only medicines this way over the past few years. A resounding 98% of pharmacists asked think more needs to be done to tackle the issue.

RPS spokesperson Neal Patel said "We are deeply concerned by the results of this survey. You should never try and get a prescription medicine online without it being authorised by a registered health professional. The medicine may not be suitable for you, and could result in serious harm to your health. It's also likely to be fake.   The best way to stay safe is to use a UK based pharmacy and if you are concerned speak to your pharmacist.

The survey reports that 80% of pharmacists questioned have seen examples of patients self-diagnosing and self-treating themselves via the internet. More than half had come across a patient who they suspected to be addicted to prescription medicines they'd obtained via the internet without their GP's knowledge.

"It's a bad idea to by-pass advice from a health professional before taking prescription medicines," said Neal. "Diagnosing with Dr Google can lead to dangerous decisions about your health, including becoming addicted to the medicines you decide to take.

"Always talk to a real-life health professional, such as a pharmacist, if you have any health concerns. We are here to help you get the right advice including the right medicines for your condition."

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For media enquiries please contact the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's [media team](#) on

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