



Royal  
Pharmaceutical  
Society  
of Great Britain

## **Self Selection of Pharmacy Medicines by the Public - A Consultation**

Pharmacy medicines are medicinal products which can be purchased over-the-counter from registered pharmacies. Although a prescription is not required to obtain Pharmacy medicines, legislation states that these medicines can only be sold from registered pharmacies by a pharmacist, or by someone who is acting under the supervision of a pharmacist.

In addition to these legal restrictions, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Code of Ethics and Standards places an ethical restriction on the accessibility of Pharmacy medicines by the public. It currently states that '*Pharmacy medicines must not be accessible for self-selection*'. As a result Pharmacy medicines are normally displayed behind the medicines counter, or in display cabinets that can only be opened by pharmacy staff. The intention of this ethical restriction is to help ensure safe, appropriate access to Pharmacy medicines and protect public safety.

In 2001 a small number of pharmacies undertook trials where pharmacy medicines were placed on display for self-selection by members of the public. The pharmacies involved in the trials had to comply with guidance developed by the RPSGB. Since that time an increasing number of pharmacies have expressed an interest in making Pharmacy medicines available for self-selection.

A range of views have been expressed about whether restrictions should be placed on the way in which Pharmacy medicines are displayed to the public. There is concern that having Pharmacy medicines available for self-selection may compromise public safety by increasing access to medicines that are liable to misuse and reducing the opportunity for pharmacy staff to establish whether the medicine selected is appropriate for the purchaser. However, others have expressed a view that making pharmacy medicines available for self-selection will increase awareness of the range of Pharmacy medicines and will enable the public to have greater involvement in decisions about their health needs.

The RPSGB is seeking your views on the current ethical prohibition on the self-selection of Pharmacy medicines and on possible alternative approaches to help ensure the safe, appropriate display of, and access to, Pharmacy medicines. The responses to this consultation will be used to help us develop professional guidelines that reflect the views of the profession and the public.

The attached questionnaire sets out questions that we would like your views on. We would welcome detailed responses to this consultation and would ask that you continue your comments on a separate sheet if necessary.

Please send your responses to **Priya Sejpal, RPSGB, 1 Lambeth High Street, London, SE1 7JN.**

The questionnaire can also be completed online at [www.rpsgb.org](http://www.rpsgb.org). Please let us have your responses by **13<sup>th</sup> April 2007.**

