

Online Pharmacies

Russian Roulette: The Dangers of Online Pharmacy



Speaker

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Today's Discussion Agenda

- ▶ Framing the Issue: Illegal Online Pharmacies
- ▶ Understanding Hoosier Perceptions and Behaviors Regarding Online Pharmacies
- ▶ Available Tools to Ensure Safety Online
- ▶ Concluding Remarks & Next Steps

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About ASOP Global

ASOP Global is dedicated to addressing the growing public health threat of illegal online drug sellers through strategic efforts around the globe, concentrating its activities in research, education, Internet commerce company voluntary actions, and policy and advocacy.

<http://buysaferx.pharmacy/>

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Cost, Convenience and Access to Care

International Business Times

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BUSINESS

US Patients Turn To Online Pharmacies For Cheap Meds, But Drug Companies Say The Sites Endanger Consumers

Daily Mail

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THE DREAM TEAM
AGAINST DRYNESS & DIRT

Patients who pay £1,000 for life-saving drugs online that would cost NHS £35,000: More and more are doing it - but doctors warn it's a big risk

- Kim Crisell, 60, from Witham, Essex, was told he faced certain death
- He had been diagnosed liver disease three years ago, and looked online
- The best hope was to wait for a new wonder drug called Harvoni

Reuters

Patients Seeking Cheaper Drugs Join Buyers Clubs

Frustrated by the high price of antiretroviral drugs, thousands of patients from London to Moscow to Sydney are turning to a new wave of online "buyers clubs" to get cheap generic medicines to cure hepatitis C and protect against HIV infection.

While regulators warn that buying drugs online is risky, scientific data presented at a recent medical conference suggest that treatment arranged through buyers club can be just as effective as through conventional channels.

Will Nutland, who supports a drug-buying network in London and takes Indian-made generic drugs that are not available through the health service to prevent HIV infection, thinks the latest research will build confidence in such schemes.

"This new data shows that so far we've got it right," the HIV activist says.

The Star

Americans turn to Canada for cheaper EpiPens

Canadian price for the life-saving allergy antidote syringe remains at about \$100, versus \$100 or more in the U.S.

Why Is This A Problem?

Hidden Poisons in Counterfeit Medications

There are a lot of shady ingredients that go into counterfeit medications that consumers can be exposed to by buying directly from unlicensed drug sellers on the internet, or when medical professionals purchase medications from outside the secured supply chain.

Investigators have found these dangerous ingredients in fake medicine.

Heavy metals	Actual poison	Common household items	Drugs you didn't ask for	No drugs at all
mercury aluminum lead cadmium arsenic chrome uranium strontium selenium	PCBs benzopyrenes rat poison boric acid antifreeze	road paint wall paint brick dust floor wax sheet rock paint thinner	aminotadalafil homosildenafil xanthoanthrafil pseudovardenafil hongdenafil sibutramine haloperidol	dextrose dextrin lactose starch saline salt

FAKE

Brick Dust: Used by counterfeiters to provide color and texture to pills, brick dust can contain poisonous heavy metals and other chemicals.

Why Is This A Problem?

- ▶ Every day, approximately 20 new illegal online pharmacy websites go live globally.
- ▶ 3,300 sites sell controlled substances like opioids, often without a prescription.
- ▶ In searching online for prescription opioids across the three major search engines, nearly 91% of the first search results led users to an illegal online drug seller offering prescription opioids.



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Why Is This A Problem?

- ▶ Common violations by illegal drug sellers include:
 - ▶ Selling **falsified, adulterated** and **unapproved medicines**;
 - ▶ Selling prescription **medications without a prescription**; and
 - ▶ Operating with **no pharmacy license**.
- ▶ Risks of over/under-dosing, drug interactions, adverse events and financial fraud.
- ▶ Online drug sellers can make between **\$1 – 2.5 million** in sales each month.
- ▶ Counterfeiters make **10x more profit** than that of illicit drug traders.

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Rogue Internet Pharmacy Operations



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Patient Harms



Woman Dies After Taking 'Diet Pills' Bought Over the Internet
The Guardian (April 2015)



Banned Slimming Drug Kills Medical Student: Coroner Attacks Online Dealers who Target the Vulnerable – *Daily Mail (April 2013)*



Paramedic Died After Taking Tablets She Bought Over the Internet to Help Her Sleep – *Daily Mail (May 2011)*

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Spotting a Fake Online Pharmacy

- ▶ Is the online pharmacy in compliance with the laws in *both* the *country of origin* and the *country of destination*?
 - ▶ Approved Medicines.
 - ▶ Licenses in Jurisdictions of Business
- ▶ Does it require a *valid prescription* for prescription medications?
 - ▶ No 'Form-Only' Medical Consultations
 - ▶ No Waivers
 - ▶ Real Doctor-Patient Relationships



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Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites™ (VIPPS)

CVS Pharmacy	
CEO	Michael D. Bryan
Address	Experience Operating a Pharmacy since June 1999
5900 Shingle Creek Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN, USA	
Dispensing Pharmacies	
Pharmacy Name	Address
CVS Pharmacy	1210 Midhurst Dr, Arlington, TX 76013, USA
Original VIPPS Certification Date	Next Verification Date
January 20, 2010	January 20, 2014
Donald McCormack	

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Verified by VIPPS

American Pharmacists Association

ExtraCare

Authentic Site

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FedEx

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Arlington, TX 76013, USA

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TO ALL COUNTRIES AND DESTINATIONS, FEEL FREE TO ORDER

Fraudulent use of NABP VIPPS seal

Fake pop-up when seal is clicked to create appearance of legitimacy

What is NABP?

- ▶ The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.
- ▶ Nonprofit, international, impartial professional organization that supports its member boards of pharmacy in protecting the public health.
- ▶ Has been certifying US-based internet pharmacy sites since 1999.
- ▶ Acquired the “.pharmacy” TLD in 2014 to create a safe online environment for internet pharmacy transactions, health products and health information.
- ▶ Public health protection – foundation for all NABP programs and services.

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.Pharmacy Consumer Education is KEY

- ▶ Consumers should recognize .Pharmacy as the valid designation for a legitimate pharmacy or related website.
- ▶ Message: *“Look to the right of the dot”*.
- ▶ Increased public awareness will decrease the impact of rogue online drug sellers masquerading as pharmacies.
- ▶ As consumer recognition increases, .Pharmacy will be the desired website domain for consumers & legitimate pharmacy businesses.

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ASOP Global Hoosier Survey

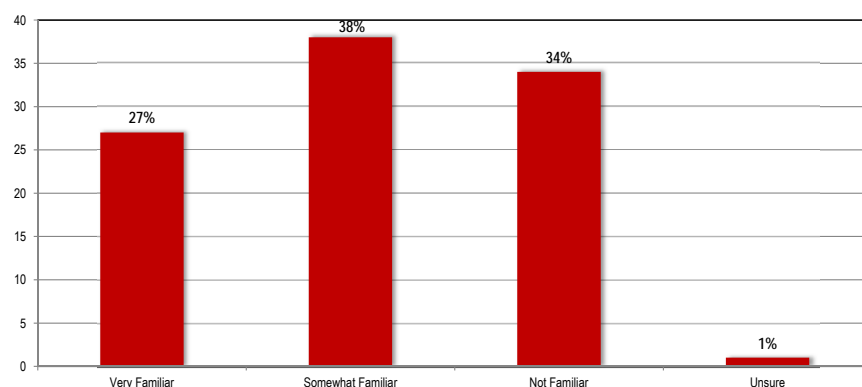
Methodology and Demographics

- ▶ ASOP Global partnered with Baselice, a nationally-recognized polling firm, to conduct a consumer survey over five days in May 2017.
- ▶ Margin of error: (+/-) 4%.
- ▶ 33% online panel; 37% landline phone; 30% mobile phone.
- ▶ 500 interviews (48% male/52% female)
 - ▶ Age distribution, race/ethnicity and partisanship representative of Indiana voters.
 - ▶ Respondent ages reflect national averages.
- ▶ 76% of participants or a member of their household currently taking a prescription medication.

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Key Consumer Behavior Findings

While only 27% of consumers are very familiar with online pharmacies, **a majority (55%) has or would consider buying medication online.**



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Key Consumer Behavior Findings

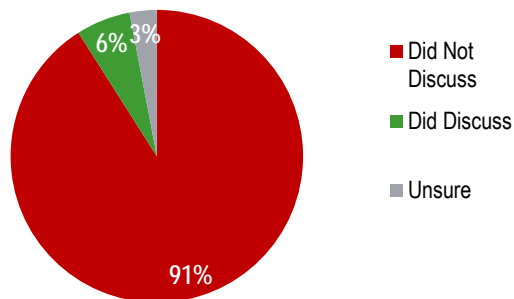
- ▶ **1/3** of respondents had purchased from an online pharmacy for themselves or someone under their care.
- ▶ Adults **over the age of 55** were most likely to have purchased from an online pharmacy.
- ▶ **Lower household income** correlates with willingness to **accept higher risks** of online pharmacy use.
- ▶ **72% of daily social media users** would consider purchasing medications online compared to 75% of non-social media users who would not consider using an online pharmacy.

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Key Consumer Behavior Findings

88% of people who have purchased prescription drugs online (purchasers) did not discuss it with their healthcare provider.

Of *all* respondents, 91% do not discuss where they get their medicines with from a provider.



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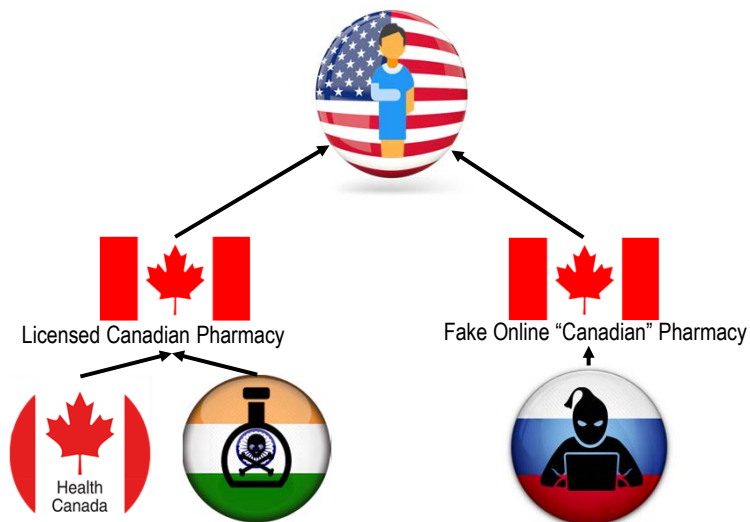
What Medicines Would Consumers Purchase Online?

- ▶ **42%** have bought or would consider buying **chronic disease medicines** online, such as products for blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- ▶ **21%** have bought or would consider buying **specialty medications** online, such as chemotherapies or hormone replacement therapy.
- ▶ **17%** of consumers have considered buying **chronic pain medications** online *(we didn't ask if they had bought in this category for fear of under self-reporting)*.

However, Less than 5% of consumers are aware of tools available to help them find safe online pharmacies.

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Canadian Pharmacies: The Misuse of the Maple Leaf



Key Consumer Perception Findings

After learning the facts, **59% of consumers oppose** prescription drug importation from Canada.

- ▶ 53% of consumers **perceived Canadian online pharmacies as risky.**
- ▶ 57% of consumers believe their **privacy and/or identity theft** is at risk.
- ▶ 15% of consumers **would consider using a Canadian online pharmacy** and are willing to accept moderate-to-high risk to do so.

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Top Facts that Impact Consumers

- ▶ Many foreign online pharmacies **do not require prescriptions** for medication, making it easier to evade law enforcement and get drugs, **worsening our the US opioid epidemic.**
- ▶ Since 2010 there have been more than **200 felony counts** against networks affiliated with Canadian online pharmacies.
- ▶ While the Canadian government requires Canadian online pharmacies to sell Canadian approved drugs to their own citizen, they **cannot ensure** Americans will receive Canadian medicines. According to the US FDA, **85%** of medicines that are sold to Americans by Canadian online pharmacies **are not Canadian.**

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Top Three Survey Takeaways

- ▶ 55% of Hoosiers have or would buy online, yet less than 5% know how to do so safely.
- ▶ Educated consumers take less risks.
- ▶ More education is needed – to healthcare providers and consumers/employees.

For more survey takeaways, please visit:

<https://goo.gl/pTwvUJ>

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FDA and Legislators Paying Attention to Online Issues

The screenshot shows a Bloomberg news article. At the top, there's a banner for AARP with the text 'TAKE ON TODAY WITH AARP'. Below that, the main headline reads 'FDA commissioner calls on Internet providers to help police opioid offerings'. The article is by Lenny Bernstein and Elizabeth Desobry, dated April 4, 2018. A sub-headline mentions 'Facebook and Twitter Pushed to Do More to Halt Online Opioid Sales'. The article text states that the FDA chief says social media sites need to take down ads and that the agency will host a summit with CEOs to identify technology gaps. There are also links to 'How America's Opioid Crisis Spiraled Out of Control' and 'FDA Wants Better Control of Online Opioid Sales'. The latter article mentions Commissioner Scott Gottlieb's plan to meet with internet companies. At the bottom right, there's a poll titled 'How would you rate the Modern Agriculture industry in terms of its use of digital tools to help farmers use fewer natural resources?' with options: Very High, High, Average.

What Can Employers Do?

1. **Remember** the majority of patients never think about the issue, but it could be adding to your insurance claims (ineffective treatment, adverse events).
2. **Partner** with ASOP Global to educate your employees – trainings, seminars, etc.
3. **Use** free ASOP Global and NABP resources: videos, factsheets, downloadable brochures.
 - a. <https://buysaferx.pharmacy/healthcare-providers-toolkit/>
 - b. <https://nabp.pharmacy/>

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Develop Your Own Toolkits to Educate Employees

Go to the following website and download infographics at NO CHARGE:
<https://buysaferx.pharmacy/for-the-media/infographics/>



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More Information for you to Customize your Toolkits

► Brochures

<https://buysaferx.pharmacy/asop-global-brochures/>



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More Information for you to Customize your Toolkits

► <https://buysaferx.pharmacy/for-the-media/fact-sheets/>

Fact Sheets

[About Online Pharmacies and Canadian Pharmacy Websites](#)

[Healthcare Providers Campaign Fact Sheet](#)

[How to Save Money on Medications and Stay Safe](#)

[Illegal Online Drug Sellers Fact Sheet](#)

[Key Data About Controlled Substances Sold Online](#)

[Key Data About Illegal Online Drug Sellers and Counterfeit Medicines](#)

[Law Enforcement Actions](#)

[Older Americans and Caregivers Campaign Fact Sheet](#)

[Online Pharmacy Consumer Behavior and Perception Survey](#)

[Patients Harmed by Medicines Purchased From Illegal Online Pharmacies](#)

[Toxins Found in Counterfeit and Falsified Medicines](#)

[Transshipment of Drugs Through Canada](#)

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Three Options to Make Your Own Toolkits

1. Download whatever you like from ASOP website at no charge and print documents yourself.

-This option has ASOP branding noted on all education material.

2. If you wish to **co-brand** with ASOP, to include your organization name and/or logo, you will need to complete an ASOP licensing agreement which is offered at no charge. If interested, contact Matt Rubin at matthew.rubin@FaegreBD.com

3. If you wish to would like to order toolkits from ASOP and pay for printing/mailing costs, contact Matt Rubin at matthew.rubin@FaegreBD.com

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FINAL MESSAGE: #BuySafeRx

Visit <https://buysaferx.pharmacy/find-a-safe-online-pharmacy/> to verify before buying medicine online



Trust websites ending in the **“.pharmacy”** (dot-pharmacy) domain.

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