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Pseudoephedrine switch plans overturned

The MHRA has revealed today that cold and flu remedies containing pseudoephedrine and ephedrine will not be reclassified from P to POM.

The drug regulator's Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) recommended that tighter controls are placed on sales of the decongestant products instead of switching its status. Pack sizes will be reduced to 12 tablets or capsules (or the equivalent of 720mg) and there will be a limit to

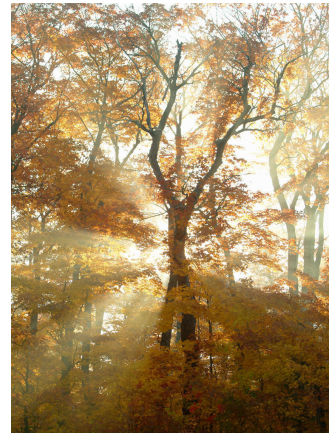
one pack per customer. The CHM also recommended that the sale be carried out by a pharmacist.

A POM switch could be enforced in 24 months if the risk of the misuse in the illicit manufacture of methylamphetamine is not contained by the controls.

National pharmacy bodies including the RPSGB, NPA, Company Chemists Association (CCA) and the Association of Independent Multiples (AIMp) welcomed the move.

New subscribers

WaveData have kindly agreed to give 100 credits for their wavedata.net live pricing information site to anyone passing on the names of colleagues who have agreed it would be interesting to receive the wholesale bulletin each month.



Actavis shells out for 10 OTC drugs

The UK arm of Icelandic generics giant Actavis has bought 10 products from Thornton & Ross, the UK's largest independently-owned maker of over-the-counter medicines.

For an undisclosed sum, Actavis has purchased all intellectual property, trade marks, licences and stocks relating to: Cymalon, for cystitis; the antiseptic cream Dermidex; the oral rehydration therapy Electrolade; Ellimans and Goddards for muscle relief; Gastrocote for heartburn relief; Morhulin for chapped skin and nappy rash; the multi-vitamin treatment Orovite; the sleep-aid Sominex; and the natural 'pick-me-up' Yeast-vite.

Explaining the strategy behind the move, Dieno George, Thornton & Ross' Chief Executive, said that the sale marks "the beginning of a new chapter" for both companies,

Asda takes OTC drugs online with Pharmacy2U

Asda has teamed up with internet pharmacy firm Pharmacy2U to provide an online shopping service. Customers can now order more than 1,000 OTC products through the supermarket's website. The products and technical support are provided by Pharmacy2U, whose pharmacists validate the orders. Asda's superintendent pharmacist John Evans said: "Internet shopping has taken off big time. It's an offer for patients to access medicines in another way.

The deal brings together the UK's second biggest

supermarket chain and the largest online pharmacy operator. But industry representatives remained confident the rise of the e-pharmacy would not have a negative fallout on high street businesses.

Georgina Craig, spokesperson for the CCA, said: "We know from mature markets like the United States, where internet pharmacy is well established, that this development does not necessarily impact significantly on bricks and mortar pharmacies."

Independent Pharmacy Federation chairman Fin

McCaul added: "The internet is something that's out there and has to be embraced by businesses. If online pharmacy is structured properly then it can benefit patients. We see it working in addition to what's already in existence rather than to take the place of it."

Supermarket rivals Sainsbury's and Morrisons said they had no current plans to develop a similar service. Tesco said many healthcare products were already available via its online grocery shopping service.

420 jobs to go as Pfizer stops manufacturing at Sandwich

The south-east of the UK is the latest place to feel the effects of Pfizer's restructuring plans as the drugs giant has announced that it is to close all of its remaining manufacturing operations in Sandwich, Kent. The move is expected to result in the loss of approximately 420 jobs, phased over the next two years, and Pfizer said that its priority will be "to support colleagues affected by this decision, including redeployment where possible", as well

as re-training. The firm added that "every effort will be made to mitigate the impact" on employees and the local community.

The end of manufacturing at Sandwich, where around 3,500 people are currently employed "is no reflection on the performance of our talented and skilled workforce", said Colin Seller, manufacturing site leader. He added that "we recognise that this may be a difficult time for colleagues and

our priority now, and over the coming weeks and months, is to support our people through this process".

Tony Maddaluna, vice president of Pfizer global manufacturing, said the decision was made with regret after 53 years operating from Sandwich. He went to note that this is simply the latest in a number of global manufacturing changes "to ensure we are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible".

Post workers threaten a fresh round of strikes

Postal workers gave warning of more national strikes yesterday as union anger over Gordon Brown's 2 per cent cap on public sector pay boiled over at the Trades Union Congress. The Communication Workers' Union (CWU) will set new strike dates next week unless Royal Mail improves a 6.7 per cent pay offer over two years. The union staged two days of strikes and a month-long programme of rolling action across the postal network before agreeing to suspend action to allow talks to take place. However, the CWU has thrown out the offer because of disagreements on changes to working practices and the pension scheme. The union wants to take strike action by the end of the month and so will have to give seven days' notice by the end of next week. Royal Mail said last night that it was disappointed that no agreement had been reached with the CWU despite several weeks of talks.

