

STOCKHOLM NETWORK PRESS COMMENT:

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The Stockholm Network says that not enough is being done to tackle counterfeit medicines.

“The business of counterfeit pharmaceutical products is heavily regulated but under policed. All indications are that this crime is on the increase”, comments Graham Satchwell, British security expert. “There is one major difference between pharmaceutical counterfeiting and most other underground industries: **lives are at stake.**”

The recent case of counterfeit Viagra provides just one example of substandard medicines being sold in the UK market. This will only continue unless the government takes the kind of action called for in the Stockholm Network publications ***A Sick Business*** (to view the full publication, please visit: <http://www.stockholm-network.org/downloads/publications/2b74e489-Sick%20Business.pdf>) and ***Coincidence or Crisis*** (to view the full publication, please visit: <http://www.stockholm-network.org/downloads/publications/d41d8cd9-Coincidence%20or%20Crisis.pdf>)

Stockholm Network research calls for urgent action on a national and pan-European level:

Governments should:

- Review the current methods for allowing importation of pharmaceutical products;
- Take the lead to ensure that industry, manufacturers and parallel traders take reasonable steps to identify counterfeit and substandard medicines and that resources are available to assist identification of counterfeits as a source of adverse drug reactions;
- Bring further pressure on countries that do not have adequate IP protection or choose not to enforce IP rights;
- Review the effectiveness of the law in relation to the obtaining of prescription medicines on the internet;
- Review the regulations that allow for the removal of brand-owner packaging and add a requirement for tamper-evident security features. We should follow the lead given by Greece, Belgium, Italy and Europe in introducing mass serialisation of pharmaceutical products. This would be the most effective means of preventing like incidents occurring.
- Educate the public on the dangers of buying pharmaceutical products from abroad on the internet. We have yet to see any real effort on behalf of the Government and the regulators to achieve this.
- To further highlight the serious health implications for this sort of crime to politicians.

British security expert, Graham Satchwell is available for interview. For further details, please contact Cara Walker, Head of Communications for the Stockholm Network on + 44 20 7354 8888 or via e-mail to: cara@stockholm-network.org- ENDS –

Notes to Editors:

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