

Reader's Digest

EUROPE HEALTH SURVEY 2008

Pharmaceutical manufacturers beware - consumers are increasingly likely to trust and use generics

In many countries across Europe most people believe that generics are just as effective as more expensive branded remedies and are happy to switch when they become available.

These are just two of the findings highlighted in a recent consumer study conducted by Reader's Digest in 11 European countries*. Over 20,000 adults participated in this survey focussed exclusively on health. The aim of the research was to capture people's opinions and understand more about who, and what, they trust on issues relating to their own and their family's wellbeing. It measures their attitudes towards advertising and the media, the actions they take to maintain their health and what influences their purchase of OTC remedies.

"We need to understand what is important to our readers in the fast changing health environment. It also helps advertisers' make better decisions in how they communicate" said Gavin Murray Regional Advertising Director Europe at Reader's Digest.

Confidence in generics is highest in the West

Across the eight participating countries in Western Europe 71% agreed that they've found generics to be just as effective as more expensive products they've used in the past. This is especially high in Finland and Portugal (78%). Although overall almost half think that generics are made by the big manufacturers, this is not the case in Germany and Switzerland where less than one in four believe this to be the case.

In the CEER countries people want more information

The priority in Czech Republic, Poland and Russia is for more information. They seek out lots of information before they buy medicines and remedies (68%) and have more confidence in the quality of a product if they're familiar with the company who made it (65%).

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Awareness of brand names is low

Awareness of over the counter brands and treatments for specific ailments is low and people rely heavily on the recommendation of the pharmacist (71%). When answering the question “what is your most trusted over-the-counter brand” for a range of illnesses (including migraine, indigestion and sore throat) response was low. People often proposed generics without attaching any brand name, manufacturer, or retailer name and many skipped the question totally.

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Notes to editors:

- Europe Health 2008 was conducted across 11 countries in Central, Eastern and Western Europe. To enable comparison it followed the same structure as the 2006 survey
- This consumer survey focuses on how people view their general health and wellbeing and the sources of information they use and trust
- It identifies the illnesses and ailments people suffer in each country and the different ways they treat these ailments
- Results enable comparison by country, and over time, of adults' perceived value of the many different sources of healthcare information
- For the first time it highlights their attitudes towards travelling abroad for medical treatment and purchase via the internet
- Respondents were drawn from the Reader's Digest subscriber database of more than 3.5 million households across Europe. Sample selection and results were weighted to reflect the broad population profiles of each of the participating countries
- A total of 20,357 questionnaires in 10 languages (including English) were analysed
- Fieldwork was carried out during June/July and August 2008 by post and on-line

Table 1

Influences on consumers' purchase of medicines and remedies for everyday ailments

Rank across Europe	Total in agreement	All countries	Western Europe	Central & Eastern Europe
1	I've found generic medicines/remedies to be just as effective as more expensive products I've used in the past	68%	71%	56%
2	I'm usually happy to switch to cheaper generic remedies when they become available	66%	69%	51%
3	Its important to have the name of the pharmaceutical manufacturer in the ads for its products	59%	58%	60%
4	I usually seek out lots of information about a medicine/remedy before I buy it	59%	56%	68%
5	I have more confidence in the quality of a product if I'm familiar with the manufacturer	56%	53%	65%

*Russia excluded from all questions related to generics

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Table 2

Consumer attitudes towards generics by country

*11 countries	Generics are just as effective	Happy to switch to generics	Generics are made by the big m'facturers
Belgium	74%	75%	52%
Finland	78%	77%	52%
France	76%	72%	65%
Germany	58%	59%	23%
Netherlands	56%	57%	54%
Portugal	78%	72%	63%
Switzerland	74%	73%	26%
UK	72%	70%	45%
Average W. Europe	71%	69%	48%
Czech Republic	60%	56%	46%
Poland	52%	45%	40%
Russia	question not included	question not included	question not included
Average CEER	56%	51%	43%

Multi country media enquiries please contact: Gavin Murray, **Regional Advertising Director Europe** at Reader's Digest. Tel: +44 (0)20 7715 8927 or e-mail gavin_murray@rd.com or visit our website: www.rdeuropehealth.com for more results and further information about the survey.