

Reader's Digest

EUROPE HEALTH SURVEY 2008

The influence of the pharmacist has grown by 20% across Europe

Although the recommendation of a doctor remains the most important influence on consumers' purchase of remedies and drugs, more and more people in every country are relying on their pharmacist for good advice.

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.

The biggest and fastest growth is the Netherlands

Although the influence of the pharmacist is highest in France (84%), it's in the Netherlands that we see the fastest growth. In 2006 just 46% of people said the recommendation of a pharmacist affected their purchase decision but this has now risen to 67% (+46%). Above average growth has also been recorded in Belgium (+29%), France (+29%) and Czech Republic (+28%).

People trust their pharmacist for advice

Across Europe 80% of people agreed they would trust their pharmacist for information about health. The pharmacist ranks third, scoring just 12% points less than doctors, and 1% point lower than dentists. In France trust in the pharmacist (97%) is almost equal to the doctor (98%). Trust in the pharmacist is also especially high in Finland (92%).

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“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.

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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
Top 5 sources of influence on consumers' purchase of medicines and remedies

Rank	Average agreement 10 countries (exc. Russia):	2008	2006	Diff
1	Recommendations of a doctor	84%	77%	9%
2	Previous use of the product	76%	69%	10%
3	Recommendations of the pharmacist	71%	59%	20%
4	Previously used the product on prescription	62%	55%	13%
5	Quality of the ingredients	50%	46%	9%

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Table 2
The increasing strength of the pharmacist by country

Recommendation of:	Pharmacist 2008	Pharmacist 2006	Difference
10 country average*	71%	59%	20%
Belgium	72%	56%	29%
Czech Republic	68%	53%	28%
Finland	70%	57%	23%
France	84%	65%	29%
Germany	66%	64%	3%
Netherlands	67%	46%	46%
Poland	61%	52%	17%
Portugal	69%	60%	15%
Russia*	NA	24%	NA
Switzerland	73%	67%	9%
UK	77%	67%	15%

*NB although these questions were asked in Russia the phrasing was slightly different and therefore not comparable with other countries or the 2006 survey

Table 3
Most trusted face to face sources of trust (for information about health)

Average across all countries	Trust
Doctor	92%
Dentist	81%
Pharmacist	80%
Family & friends	64%
Other health professionals	62%

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Table 4
I trust my pharmacist for information about health

Country	Trust
All country average	80%
Belgium	85%
Czech Republic	69%
Finland	92%
France	97%
Germany	77%
Netherlands	87%
Poland	78%
Portugal	85%
Russia	42%
Switzerland	79%
UK	86%

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.