E-pharmacy in Europe: Where do we stand?

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Brussels March 1, 2001
European Association of Mail Service Pharmacies
Trust

- Issues: distance, quality, façade of website
- European Association of Mail Service Pharmacies
- Guidelines that go further than GPP draft
GPP guidelines e-pharmacies draft 2

- Assurance of privacy: encrypted patient data
- Professional website: no misleading ads
- Education and professional skills at least comparable to regular pharmacies
- Dispensing according to same standards as in regular pharmacy
- Presentation of all necessary information and advise to the customer
- Tracking and tracing must be possible
Trust

- Issues: distance, quality, façade of website
- European Association of Mail Service Pharmacies
- Guidelines that go further than GPP draft
- ISO-certification
- Quality seal by EU or national governments
Why start an e-pharmacy?

To create a combination of:

• fair drug prices from the Netherlands
• high drug safety standards from e.g. Germany
• patient focused communication between doctor, pharmacist, and patient like in the Netherlands
• the high degree of innovation from the Scandinavian countries
• the modern aspects of e.g. the British pharmacy system
• and the specific chances of E-commerce
Why use an e-pharmacy?

- Service
- Price
- Privacy
- Freedom of choice
- (Intelligent) information
- Compliance management
Specific problems of e-pharmacies

• Not allowed in every country of the EU
• Dispensing of ‘foreign’ drugs not allowed
• Regular cross-border traffic
• Also OTC is monopolized in e.g. Germany
• Unique identification of patients with regard to electronic data-exchange with other health care professionals is problematic
Advantages

• Reduce drug cost without government measures
• Innovation of accomplished high standards from one country to others
• Efficient dispensing and build-up of data for pharmaco-economic studies
• Lower inventories, economies of scale, filling a service need for a select group of people, 7 x 24 h availability, privacy, e-mail reminders, increase of patient compliance
Conclusions

- Support for 0800DocMorris from media and over 20,000 patients
- Fear of health insurers to move
- Fear of wholesalers to supply
- Enormous legal costs, e.g. DocMorris in Berlin and Frankfurt
- Winning in Berlin and losing in Frankfurt still means a loss in Germany
- What can be done by Brussels?
European legal considerations

• European laws allow free trade of pharmaceutical products within the EU, when:
  – they are dispensed by a licensed pharmacist.
  – the drugs are registered within the EU
  – they are for personal use only

• The E-commerce directive of the European Commission declares free internet-trade within the EU. Central part is the principle of the country of origin instead of the country of destination.