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No need for further restrictions on cold remedies containing pseudoephedrine

Cold and flu remedies containing pseudoephedrine will remain available over-the-counter as pharmacy (P) medicines. A Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) review on the impact of the tighter controls revealed no new reports of the misuse of pseudoephedrine in the past year. As a result the Commission on Human Medicines has advised that no further restrictions are necessary.

For the past two years pharmacists have been restricting supply of medicines containing pseudoephedrine following changes to the law. People have been unable to buy more than one pack at a time. This has resulted in a 25 per cent drop in the number of pseudoephedrine tablets or capsules being sold. This restriction was introduced to limit the possibility of pseudoephedrine being used to make methylamphetamine (crystal meth).

Sheila Kelly, PAGB Executive Director, comments: "The manufacturers of pseudoephedrine products fully co-operated with the MHRA to introduce the pack size restrictions two years ago. We are pleased that there has been no evidence of misuse of these medicines and that there is no need to restrict supply to prescription only."

"Used as intended, pseudoephedrine is a very effective decongestant, included in many cold and flu remedies. Its continued availability is important to help people manage their cold and flu symptoms, particularly at this time when we face an escalating flu pandemic."

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of over-the-counter medicines and food supplements.

The legislation was put in place from 1st April 2008 to restrict the sales of pseudoephedrine (PSE) and ephedrine (EPH):



- It became illegal to sell or supply any product that contains more than 720 mg PSE or 180 mg EPH without a prescription.
- It became illegal to sell or supply a combination of products that between them contain more than 720 mg PSE or 180 mg EPH without a prescription.
- It became illegal to sell more than one pack per customer per sale.

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