



Consumer Views on Sourcing Information on Medicines

6th April, 2010

National Survey Results

Research Objectives

The objectives for the consumer research included the following:

- To ascertain whether or not consumers consult a healthcare professional before purchasing a medicine.
- To ascertain whether or not consumers consult/read the packaging/label/product information supplied leaflet with a medicine prior to taking it.
- To establish what sources of information consumers trust the most with regards to their health and medicines – i.e. do they seek advice from their GP or pharmacist or do they go online.
- To establish how (if at all) consumers use the internet in diagnosing their symptom.



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Research Objectives

- To establish if information found on websites influences consumers' decision-making process when purchasing a medicine.
- To ascertain what proportion of consumers have purchased medicines online.
- To gain an understanding of consumers perceptions of the risks of seeking to purchase a medicine online and indeed the legality of that action.

Research Methodology: The survey was conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes – representative quota sample of 1,000 adults (aged 16 years and over) using face to face interviews.



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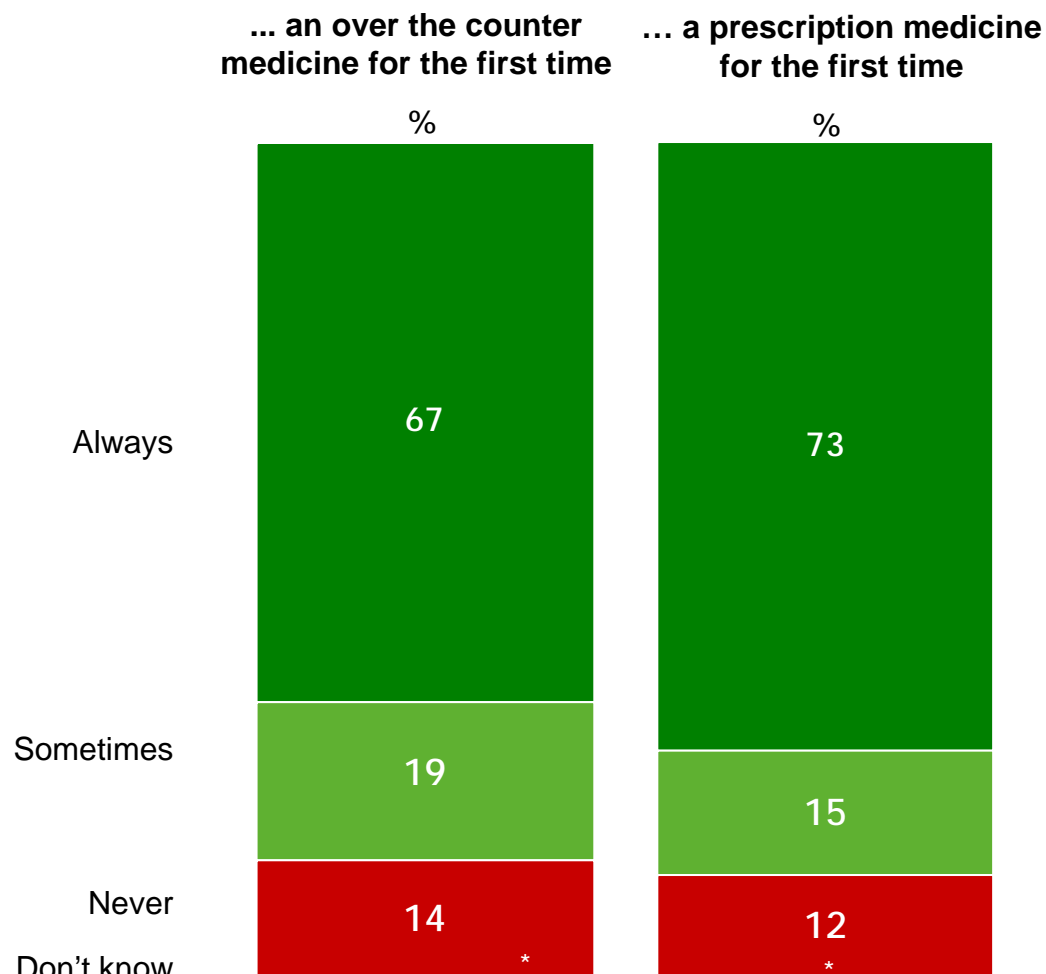
Key Findings



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Do you read product information before taking

All Respondents: 1002



Close to 3 in 4 claim to read product information before taking a prescription medicine for the first time.

Note * denotes less than 1%

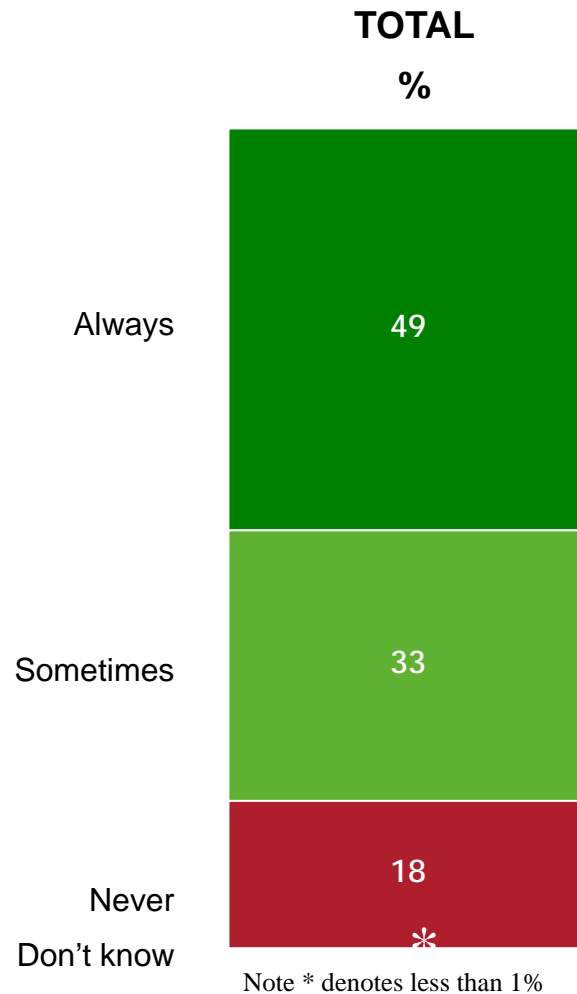
Claimed reading of medicinal product information is extensive



Q.1a With every medicine, there is product information (dosage, ingredients, etc.) written on the packaging and in a leaflet inside the pack. Do you read this information before taking...?

Incidence of seeking advice from healthcare professional before taking new OTC medicine

All Respondents: 1002



About half of all adults always seek advice before taking new OTC medicine.



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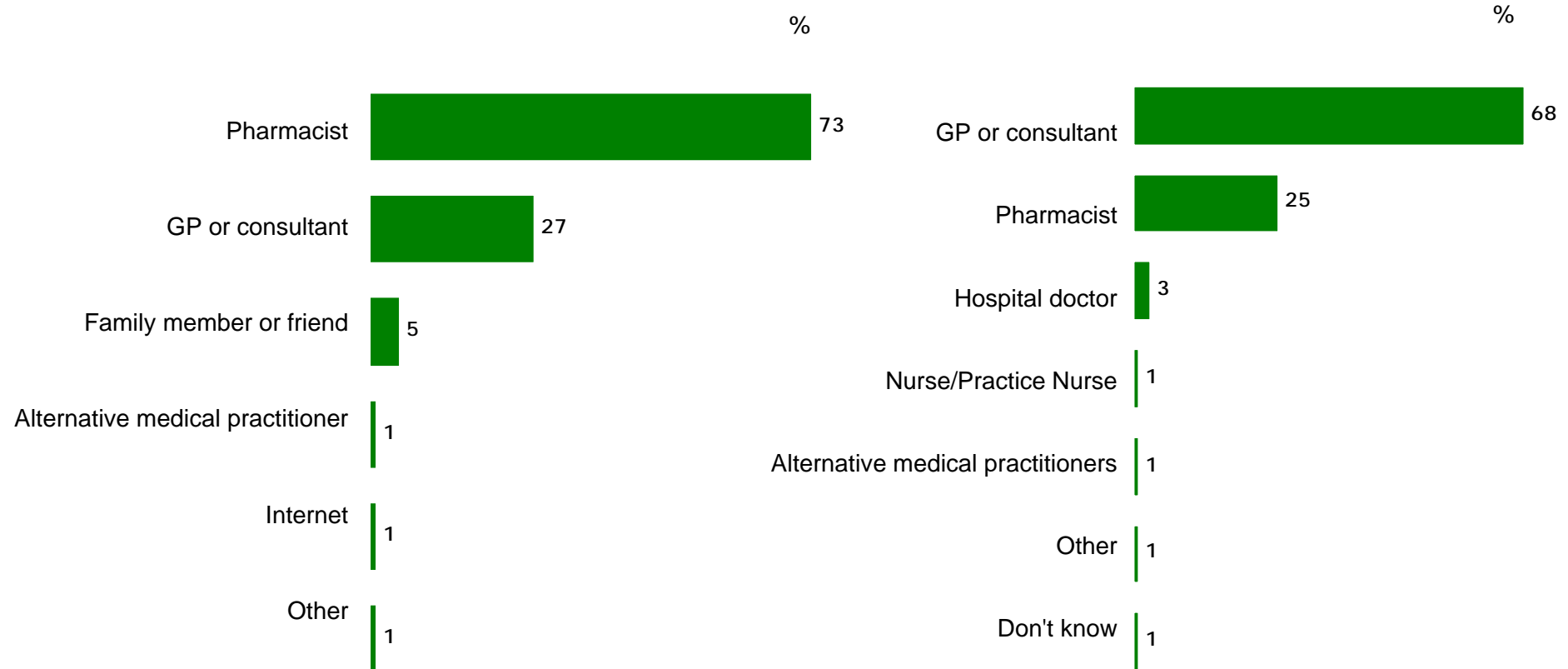
Q.2a Before deciding to take a new over the counter medicine do you seek advice from a healthcare professional?

Where do you typically seek advice on new OTC medicines

Always/sometimes seek advice: 825

Which of the following sources of information on medicines do you trust the most?

All Respondents: 1002



GPs and Pharmacists continue to dominate as the most trusted sources of advice and information in an Irish context. On this measure the internet barely registers as a trusted source.



Q.2a Where do you typically seek this advice?

Q.2b Which of the following sources of information on medicines do you trust the most?

Information averse

- 18% of all adults (est. pop 644,000) can be described as averse to medical product information.
- This group:
 - Never/sometimes read new prescription product information and ...
 - Never/sometimes read new OTC product information and ...
 - Never/sometimes seek advice from a healthcare professional before taking a new OTC medicine
- Indeed, 5% of all adults (178,000) never do any of the above.

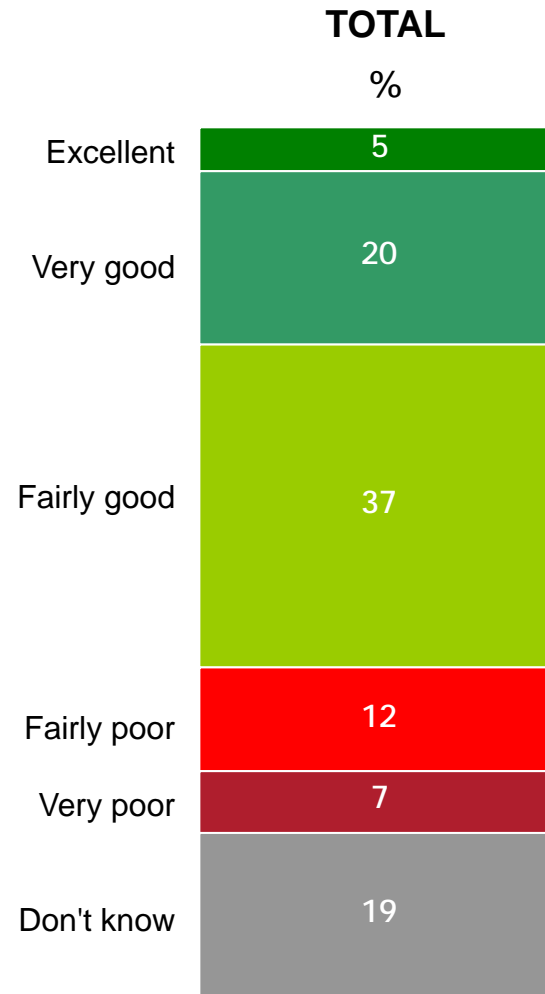
- The demographic profile confirms that this group averse to medical product information is more likely to be:
 - ❖ Men
 - ❖ Under 24 years
 - ❖ C2DE
 - ❖ Single



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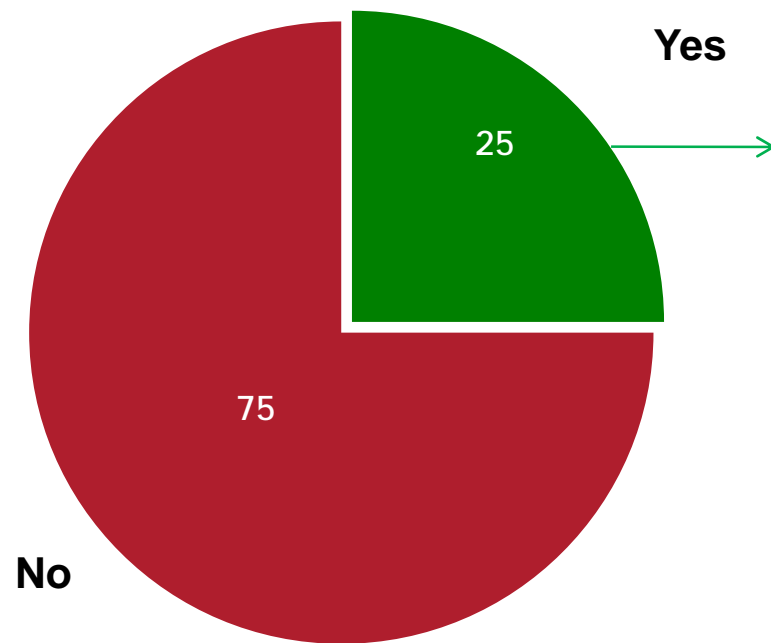
How highly would you rate the internet as a source of information on medicines?

All Respondents: 1002

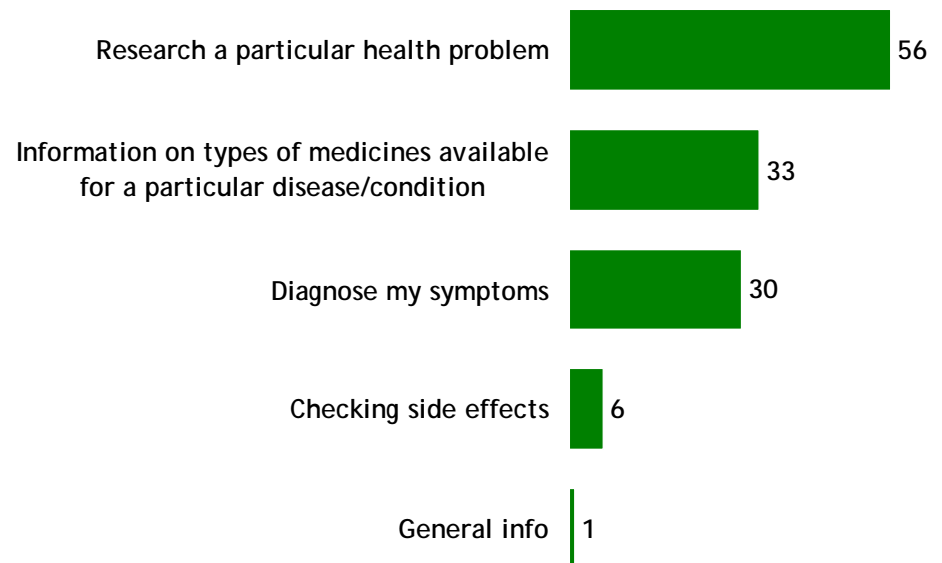


Do you use the internet as a source of information on medicines?

All Respondents: 1002



Type of Information Sourced

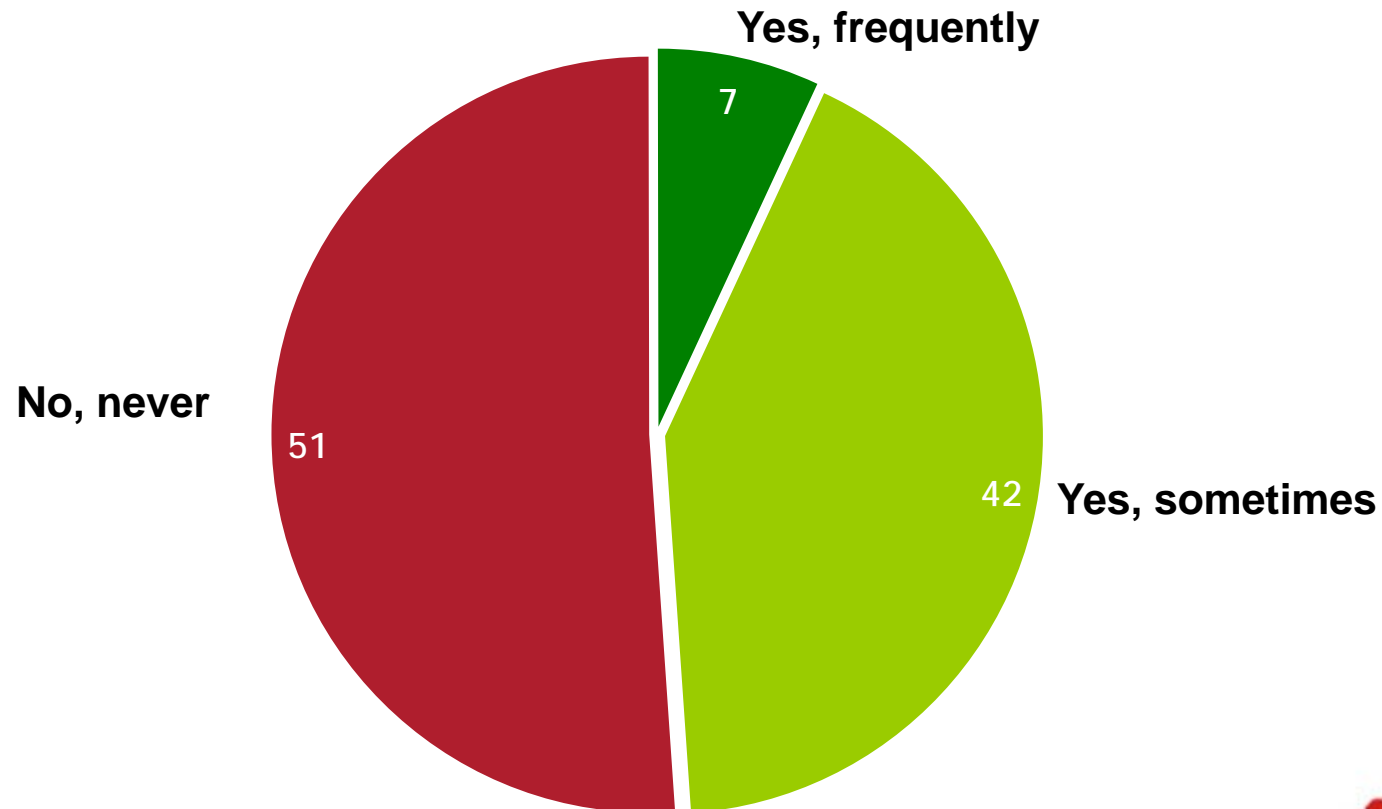


1 in 4 use internet as information source on medicines.

Close to 1 in 3 (30%) of those who research medicinal information online do so to self-diagnose.

Does the internet influence your choice of medicine or treatment?

Use internet as source of info: 245



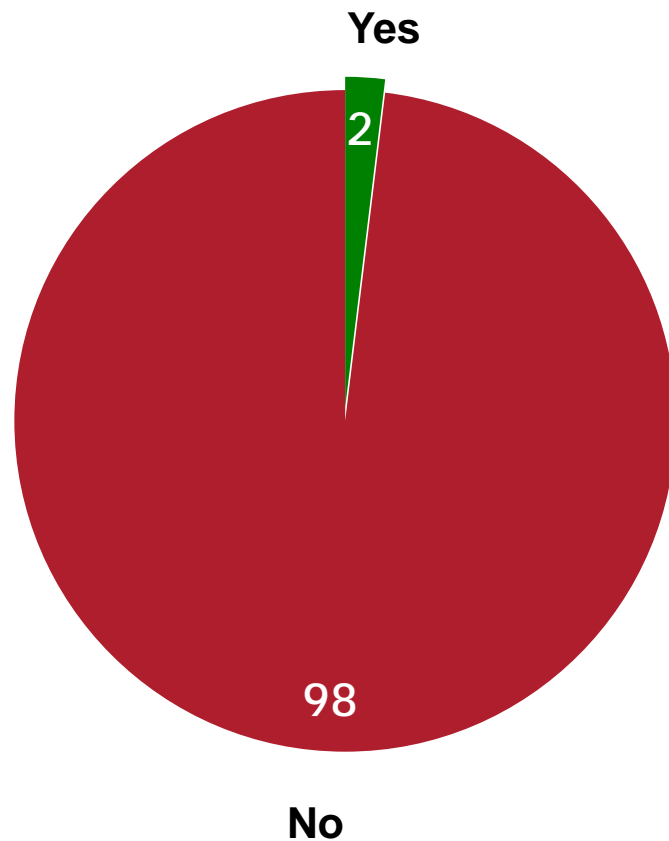
Internet is a significant influence: it influences choice of medicine or treatment for half of those who use (49%)



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Have you ever purchased medicines on the internet?

All Respondents: 1002



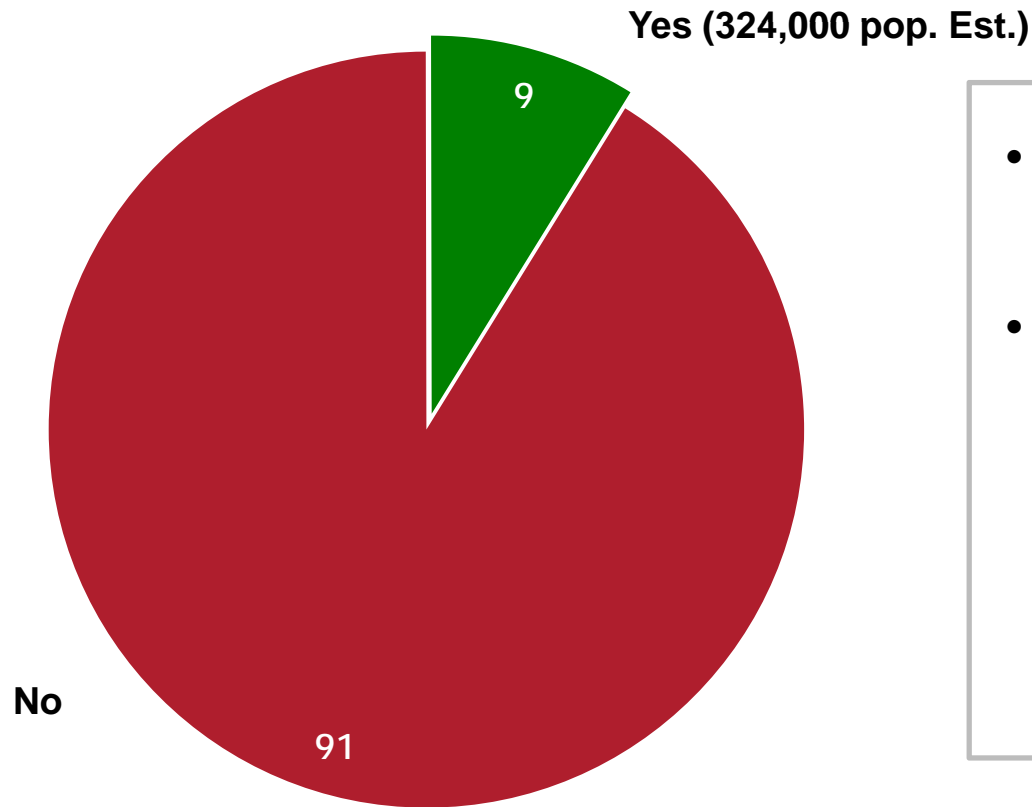
- Only 2% of all adults claim to have actually purchased medicines online (equates to 64,000 adults). This rises to 6% of those who use internet as information source on medicines.



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Would you consider purchasing medicines on the internet in the future?

All Respondents: 1002



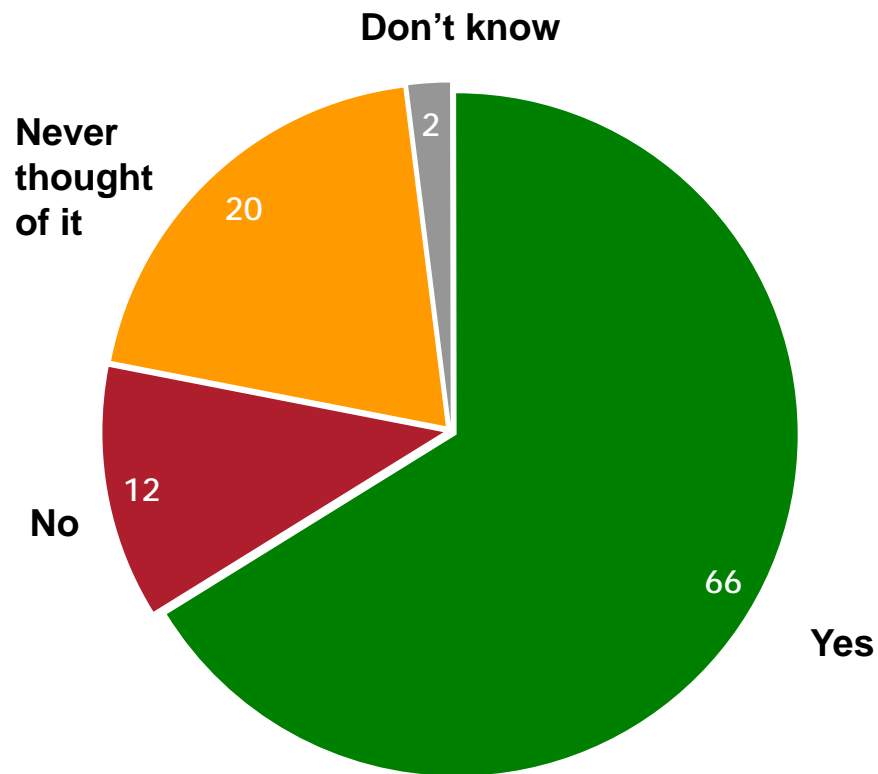
- Close to 1 in 10 would consider purchasing medicines online in the future.
- 1 in 4 (26%) of those who use net as information source on medicines would consider purchasing medicines online in the future, with 62% of these citing 'cheaper price' as the key perceived benefit of doing so.



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Concerns about the authenticity or safety of medicines available on the internet

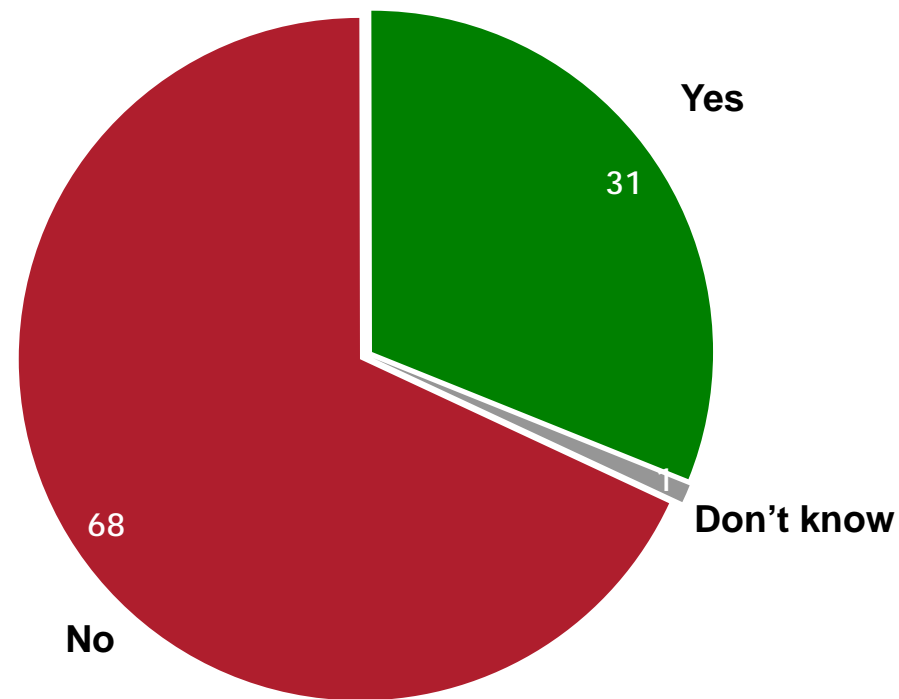
All Respondents: 1002



Two thirds of all adults have concerns over online medicines

Aware that it is illegal in Ireland to buy prescription medicines on the internet

All Respondents: 1002



Q.8a Would you have concerns about the authenticity or safety of medicines available on the internet?

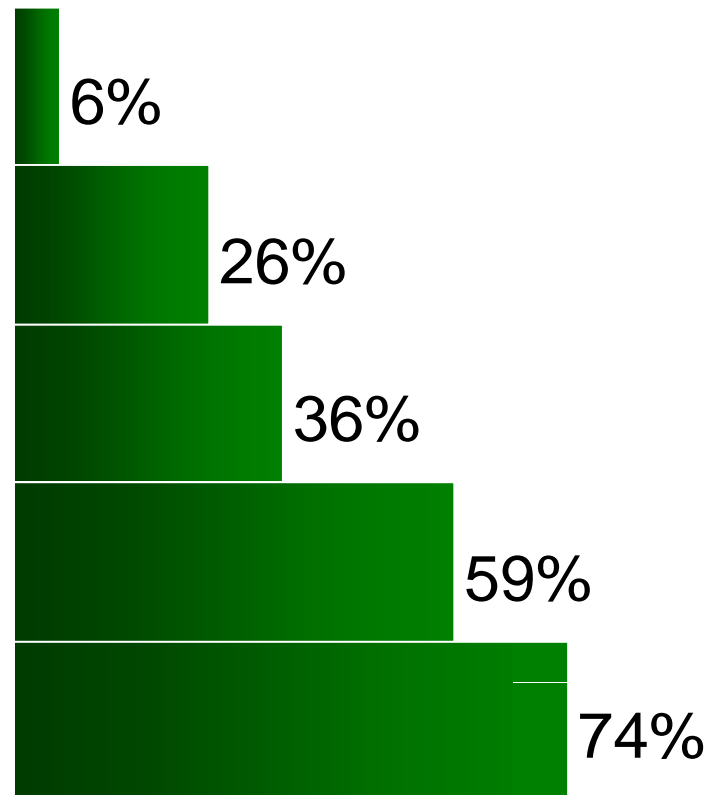
Q.8b Are you aware that it is illegal in Ireland to buy prescription medicines on the internet?

Online Users: Use Internet as source of information on Medicines

Summary

868,000 adults (25% of adult population): highest among under 34s, ABC1s and in Rest of Leinster

Please note:
These percentages relate only to the 25% of adults who use the internet to source information about medicines



Have purchased medicines online

Would consider purchasing medicines online in the future

Are aware that it is illegal in Ireland to buy prescription medicines online

Rate internet as excellent/very good source of information on medicines

Have concerns about authenticity or safety of medicines available online

Despite level of use and appreciation of quality of source, conversion to actual online purchase is very low.



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