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GIRP calls for "well balanced solution" to counterfeits, checks at dispensation
by Helen Collis

CANNES, June 7 (APM) - The director-general of GIRP, the European wholesalers' association, has urged members of the European Parliament to support a "well balanced solution" to deal with the issue of counterfeit medicines on the market.

Speaking at a press conference at GIRP's annual general meeting on Monday, Monika Derecque-Pois reiterated that the association does not support wholesaler batch number recording, instead suggesting product verification at the point of dispensation would be more suitable.

Derecque-Pois was reiterating GIRP's views (APMHE 16821) as the European Parliament prepares for an up-coming plenary session on the issue.

An automated system which captures product information would require all drugs to have a batch number, expiry date and a national identification number.

Derecque-Pois said a randomised serial number for products in danger of being counterfeited also needs to be added to packaging in a machine-readable format.

She emphasised that to prevent counterfeit medicines, the application of safety features should be decided regardless of the distribution channel.

Finally she said that full-line wholesalers recording product batch numbers would not lead to increased supply chain safety, as falsified medicines also carry a batch number.

Speaking to APM, she said this system would also be inefficient and slow, significantly impacting the two-hour maximum wait time to deliver urgently to pharmacists - the "just in time" delivery system that GIRP's members provide.

Instead, she repeated the association's views expressed last year - that the best method to prevent counterfeit medicines is to verify their authenticity at the point of dispensation - at the pharmacy. She pointed to a pilot scheme in Sweden which had already proven that this method worked well and was feasible. (APMHE 18669)

Derecque-Pois also called on the Council of Europe and the European Commission to ensure that a sound and solid new legislation covering all participants in and around the supply chain of drugs, which is "result-orientated" rather than "process driven".

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