



UROLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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Urologists Warn Against Purchasing Erectile Dysfunction Medication Online

Australian men are being warned that self prescribing drugs for erectile dysfunction and purchasing from online sources may have serious health consequences.

According to Dr David Malouf, President of the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand, recent research indicates counterfeit versions of Viagra and Cialis, commonly found on the internet, may contain anything from zero active ingredients to almost two and a half times the acceptable level of phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitors.¹

“The potential health risks of this type of self medication cannot be understated,” said Dr Malouf.

“Not only did more than half the number of counterfeits tested have excessive amounts of the active ingredient, many also contained unapproved and toxic materials including lead and mercury, which can of course, lead to other serious health conditions.”

The research, presented this month at the American Urological Association’s Annual Scientific Meeting in San Francisco, is yet another reminder of the dangers of purchasing pharmaceuticals from unregulated, international online sites, where there are no checks and balances on product legitimacy.

“Many people simply assume they are buying the real product when in fact most online purchases from international sites are illegal counterfeits,” Dr Malouf said.

Analysis of 12 counterfeits of Viagra and 7 of Cialis were compared with their legitimate prescription counterparts, obtained directly from the manufacturer. Of the counterfeit products, 58 percent were found to have too much of the active ingredient, PDE5, while 37 percent contained none.

“It is alarming that only one of the 19 counterfeit tablets examined contained the correct dose of the medication,” said Dr Malouf.

“Unfortunately, the potential embarrassment of discussing erectile dysfunction with a doctor is often what drives people to purchase online, yet men need to know that their doctors are very familiar with the condition and are the only ones fully qualified to diagnose and treat the problem,” Dr Malouf said.

¹ The Journal of Urology, Vol 183, No. 4. June 2010

He also expressed concern that men who don't consult their doctor when faced with erectile dysfunction also run the risk of not being diagnosed with other serious health issues.

"It's not uncommon for erectile dysfunction to actually be an indicator of other health risks, such as metabolic syndrome or heart disease," he said.

"By not seeking advice from your GP in the first instance, these could go undiagnosed for some considerable time."

The Urological Society recommends men experiencing erectile dysfunction should consult their doctor in the first instance and most definitely refrain from self medication," said Dr Malouf.

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