

## Panel Discussion

---

### Money, Drugs and Power: The future of Internet pharmacy

J.H. Dzenowagis<sup>a,\*</sup> ([dzenowagisj@who.int](mailto:dzenowagisj@who.int)), K.A. Clauson<sup>b</sup> ([clauson@nova.edu](mailto:clauson@nova.edu)), A.A. Lendyak<sup>c</sup>, M. Veronin<sup>d</sup>, J.C. Cohen<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland*

<sup>b</sup>*Nova Southeastern University – College of Pharmacy, Fort Lauderdale, USA*

<sup>c</sup>*Danylo Halytsky – Lviv National Medical University, Lviv, Ukraine*

<sup>d</sup>*Texas A&M Health Science Center – Irma Lengel College of Pharmacy, Kingsville, USA*

<sup>e</sup>*Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy – University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*

**PANEL ABSTRACT:** Over the past decade the Internet has become a force for change in the global pharmaceutical industry and has the potential to dramatically and permanently alter the landscape of drug prescribing, marketing and distribution. More recently, the explosive growth of Internet pharmacies has brought with it the promise of better access to drugs, more informed and involved consumers and a more competitive, responsive marketplace. It has also brought new opportunities for fraud and abuse, as well as opening a new route for organized crime through the sale of illicit substances, counterfeiting and identity theft.

In addition, there have been significant and well-publicized conflicts at the national and supranational level, between those seeking to limit or regulate sales and control the practices of the online pharmaceutical market and those seeking to expand and liberalize it. There is an ongoing tension between the virtual and physical worlds as the global online environment increasingly comes into conflict with national systems unable to manage the consequences of this borderless phenomenon.

The first wave of transformation is over and it is clear that Internet pharmacies are here to stay. A second wave of change is now underway, manifest in the fierce pressures and power struggles for market share and in the fundamental transformation in relationships between consumers, health professionals, government and industry. These power struggles have ramifications on the global, national and local level as the industry races to leverage new technologies, as the criminal element quickly exploits gaps in regulation and legislation, as health professionals strive to deliver safe and effective care in an uncertain and unstable environment, and as consumers worldwide increasingly demand change and choice.

This panel draws on research and expertise in legal, regulatory and ethical issues, pharmaceutical practice, global drug supply chains, international governance and consumer education to explore the challenges of the next decade as the market matures and the impact of Internet pharmacy is better understood.

Participants will highlight the real and perceived dangers, the expected and unanticipated consequences for the consumer, the impact on pharmaceutical practice and implications for the workforce itself. The

---

\*These authors were submitted as lecturers of the presentation.

panel will consider the role of consumers, health professionals, industry and governments in ensuring that the potential of Internet pharmacy is actualized and seamlessly integrated into the delivery of effective healthcare.

The panel will introduce new perspectives, approaches, and technologies towards managing the conflicts and challenges and strengthening the capacity to protect consumers and markets in this dynamic environment.