

Press Information

## **National Attitudes towards Antibiotic Treatment of Colds and Flu**

### **Summary of Consumer Health Information Centre survey (Sept 1998)**

The following survey results were obtained through a Gallup poll conducted in the weeks after the Government's recommendations on restriction of antibiotic use for colds and flu.

- One in four of the population of England, Scotland and Wales (26%) ask their doctor for antibiotics when they have a bad cold or flu.
- Of those asking their doctor for antibiotics, those in age group 16-24 are more likely to ask when they have a bad cold or when they have flu.
- Results suggest that the request for antibiotics to treat a bad cold or flu is not due to a lack of confidence in self-medication but
  - over half (55%) said this was because they wanted to get better quicker
  - a fifth (21%) said this because they believe that antibiotics work
- The motivation also varied with age
  - the 16-24 age group are more likely to ask for antibiotics because they want to get better quicker (72%)
  - the 65+ age group are most likely to ask because they believe antibiotics work (29%)
- Those in social group A/B are more likely to ask for antibiotics when they have a bad cold than those in groups C2 and D/E.
- **Key regional breakdowns:**
  - people in Greater London are more likely to ask for antibiotics when they have a bad cold (26%) than those in the rest of England, Scotland and Wales (average 19%).
  - people in SW and Wales are less likely to ask for antibiotics when they have flu (15%) than those in rest of England and Scotland (average 20%).

-ENDS-

#### **Notes to editors:**

- The Gallup Organization conducted 2054 telephone interviews with a representative sample of British adults aged 16+ between the 18th and 23rd of September 1998. Quotas were set for region and the sample was weighted to the known profile of all adults. There is a margin of error of 2.2%.

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