

Press release

Results demonstrate EFPIA anti-counterfeit product verification pilot project successful

Brussels, 14 April 2010 - EFPIA, the voice of the research-based pharmaceutical industry in Europe, today published the results of their product verification system pilot project. The pilot, held in Sweden between September 2009 and January 2010, successfully demonstrated that a product verification system at the point of dispense, based on a two-dimensional data matrix, is both robust and effective.

The pilot project scanned and verified almost 100,000 packs in 25 pharmacies across Stockholm, at the time of dispensing, in collaboration with pharmaceutical retail chain Apoteket AB. The project also had the support of pharmaceutical distributors Tamro and KD Pharma and the cooperation of LIF, the Swedish pharmaceutical manufacturers' association. Packs from 14 manufacturers were provided with the 2-D data matrix, allowing each pack to be individually identified. The EFPIA solution could provide a valuable asset in reducing the risk of counterfeit medicines reaching patients via the legitimate supply chain.

David Brennan, CEO of AstraZeneca and EFPIA Board champion for the project said: "Counterfeit medicines pose a threat to patient safety, so we want to be sure that the patient receives genuine medicine every time." He continued: "This pilot has demonstrated that the proposed EFPIA model could offer a proportionate and cost-effective means to improve the security of medicines."

Stefan Carlsson, CEO of Apoteket, added: "We undertook this project to make our contribution to developing a new system that could improve patient safety. He added: "We were very pleased with the experience; the system integrated seamlessly into our existing Point of Sale system and normal workflow; this made it easy to use. Our experience of the Data Matrix suggests it will be valuable for preventing counterfeits and for other management functions in the pharmacies."

Key findings from the pilot include that the system provides for the effective identification of fake packs as well as expired or short dated packs and recalled products. There was a clear need for packs to have only a single barcode; users were sometimes confused by the presence of more than one code on the pack. The results strongly indicate that the proposed EFPIA model is viable, proportionate, secure and cost-effective.

EFPIA has sought the support of all stakeholders, which means effectively addressing their needs. Imposing high-end or expensive solutions throughout the supply chain without the close collaboration with stakeholders is likely to generate resistance to uptake. This pilot project has provided an excellent example of constructive co-operation amongst all stakeholders in the pharmaceutical supply chain; wholesalers, retail pharmacists and the authorities.

The **Joint Final Report** is available for [download here](#).

###

Contact	Useful links
Colin Mackay, Tel: (+32) 2 626 25 57 E-mail: colinmackay@efpia.org	www.efpia.eu

About EFPIA

EFPIA represents the pharmaceutical industry operating in Europe. Through its direct membership of 32 national associations and 40 leading pharmaceutical companies, EFPIA provides the voice of 2,200 companies committed to researching, developing and bringing new medicines to improve health and quality of life around the world.

EFPIA member are committed to delivering innovative medicines to address unmet needs of patients and reducing the burden of chronic diseases for Europe's ageing population. EFPIA believes in close cooperation with its stakeholders to help create sustainable healthcare systems and to develop prompt responses to health threats in Europe.

The pharmaceutical sector directly employs some 635,000 people in Europe including 117,000 working in research and development. The industry also generates around three to four times more employment both upstream and downstream.

Europe's research-based pharmaceutical industry generates a substantial trade surplus, estimated at about €48,000 million in 2008, and has contributed significantly to reducing the European Union's trade deficit in high-tech products. Almost a quarter of the EU's high-tech exports are pharmaceutical products.