

ONLINE PHARMACIES

Frequent warnings appear in the press expressing the potential risks of obtaining drugs and medicines from internet sources. Often such warnings are accompanied by instances in which individuals often, it seems, young people who have suffered as a result of using web-sourced products.

Therapists, as well as hairdressers, may well find themselves as a confidant to their clients and a knowledge of such internet risks may be in a position to advise and avert a potential disaster.

In Ireland a recent report told of an 18 year old girl who had been preparing for a holiday in the sun with friend had decided to lose some weight. She had purchased a herbal slimming agent on-line called Botanical Soft Gel in order to “tone up” for her holiday. Five days later she was admitted to hospital suffering severe abdominal pains and bloodied faecal discharges. Doctors diagnosed acute ischemic colitis. In this instance, faced with possible organ failure, the girl underwent an emergency colectomy with its obvious lifelong consequences.

Investigations by the Irish Medical Board discovered the pills contained a high dose of Sibutramine. This drug is similar to the amphetamines that are used to help obese adults to lose weight. However this particular drug was banned globally in 2010 because it was found to cause an increased risk of heart attacks. Significantly the authorities have been unable to determine the source of this ‘medicine’ meaning that it remains out there and available to other unsuspecting customers.

If just one therapist has the knowledge of, and the opportunity to intervene, then a disaster may be averted and the therapist’s action could become critical to the well-being of their client.