Any UK registered site can be prosecuted (usually for an offence under The Medicines Act 1968); however, its influence over non-UK-based sites is limited.

In an attempt to help customers who have difficulty knowing whether an Internet pharmacy is a legitimate operation, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) has introduced a logo which will be seen on the home page of participating online pharmacy web sites. (Figure 1) This is intended to help patients identify whether a web site offering medicines online is connected to a registered pharmacy.

Although Internet pharmacies have improved access and choice for many, clinicians should be aware that patients may seek and obtain antibiotics through these channels. Furthermore, there is serious concern about the quality and safety of these drugs and we believe there should be a tighter regulation of this industry.

S.D. Goldenberg
Guy’s & St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust and King’s College, London and Directorate of Infection, 5th Floor North Wing, St. Thomas’ Hospital, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH, UK
e-mail: Simon.goldenberg@gstt.nhs.uk

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Identification of critical coronary artery disease

Sir,

Although stigmata such as the occurrence of ST-segment elevation (STE) in lead aVR, with concurrent ST-segment depression in leads II, III, aVF, and V3–V6, are highly suggestive of left main stem (LMS) occlusion, and were indeed present, in part, in the recently reported case, they also occur in left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery occlusion, and, to a lesser extent, also in left circumflex artery occlusion, thereby justifying urgent triage for percutaneous intervention in virtually all patients with acute coronary syndrome characterized, as in one study, by ST-segment elevation in aVR co-existing with ST segment depression in at least 6 leads. The latter was a study with important implications for triaging of suspected LMS occlusion although its major limitation was its retrospective methodology. The patients enrolled in the study were selected from 427 who had undergone coronary artery angiography for investigation of acute coronary syndrome. The 57 enrolled patients were characterized by the fact that they had electrocardiographic (ECG) findings, namely, ST segment elevation in aVR with concomitant ST-segment depression in at least 6 leads, suggestive of LMS disease. In that study severe LMS disease, characterized by 90–100% stenosis (including 100% occlusion in 6 patients), was identified in 20 patients. Among the 37 with significant stenosis (i.e. decrease in luminal diameter of 75% or more) not attributable to LMS disease, there were 10 with LAD disease, and 19 with left circumflex artery disease. Significant right coronary artery stenosis was present in 5, and significant 3-vessel stenosis was present in 3. ST-segment elevation in aVR was 100% specific but only 30% sensitive for LMS occlusion. ST-segment depression in lead II was, however, 100% sensitive for LMS occlusion. Conversely, in a study in which patients with acute myocardial infarction (AMI) were enrolled only if they had angiographically validated LMS occlusion, ST-segment elevation in aVR was documented in 65.85% of the 41 enrolled patients. The coexistence of ST segment elevation in aVR as well as aVL was present in 39% of the 41 patients, and its prevalence was significantly (P<0.05) higher in non-survivors than in survivors of LMS-related myocardial infarction. In that study, as well, the coexistence of left anterior fascicular block (LAFB) was significantly (P<0.05) more prevalent in non-survivors than in survivors of LMS-related AMI. Although, according to one view, ‘The search for electrocardiographic criteria to
differentiate (LCA) left coronary artery) disease from other lesions effectively requires prospective studies, especially in the case of non-ST elevation ACS... in the interim, the best we can do is to rely on current observations,1–5 to raise the index of suspicion for LMS occlusion and to inform decisions about triage for percutaneous coronary intervention.

O.M.P. Jolobe
Manchester Medical Society, c/o John Rylands University Library, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PP, UK
email: oscarjolobe@yahoo.co.uk

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