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### Over-the-counter (OTC) Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs): how much do consumers really know?

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## Over-the-counter (OTC) Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs): how much do consumers really know?

### Abstract

Abstract of paper that was presented at the National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2014, 21-23 May, Brisbane, Australia.

### Disciplines

Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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# 204 | Over-the-counter (OTC) Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs): How much do consumers really know?

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**Background:** Many Australians purchase over-the-counter (OTC) Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs). If not taken appropriately, these medications can cause severe adverse events. This study aimed to investigate consumers knowledge of these preparations and their potential side effects.

**Methods:** Customers aged over 18 years purchasing OTC Nurofen and/or Nurofen Plus from seven NSW community pharmacies, located in different socio-economic areas, were asked to complete an anonymous survey between January - August 2013. The survey questionnaire assessed the customers health literacy skills along with demographic data, as well as their knowledge about active ingredients, the maximum recommended daily dosage and common side effects associated with taking these products.

**Results:** In total, 263 consumers completed the surveys (180 females). The majority (71%, n=187) had attended school to Year 11 or higher and had high health literacy skills. One third (32%;n=84) did not know the maximum recommended daily dose; 17% (n=45) did not know that ibuprofen was the active ingredient and 40% (n=105) thought that aspirin was an active ingredient in these products. Moreover, 42% (n=110) and 48% (n=126) did not know that taking these products could cause gastrointestinal disturbance and/or bleeding, respectively.

**Discussion:** The findings of this study highlight that pharmacists need to play more of an active role in educating all consumers about the potential for NSAID-related adverse effects. Despite high health literacy, a significant number of consumers could not identify the active ingredient and the recommended maximum daily dose, increasing the risk of unintentional NSAID-related harm from these products. The results also suggest that the scheduling for NSAIDs needs to be reviewed to ensure consumers can be provided with the necessary education and information about these products at the point of purchase.

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