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UK Consumers Want Greener Manufacturing, Recyclable Packaging And Better Information

by [David Ridley](#)

Commitments to environmentally sustainable production processes and recyclable packaging for OTC products are increasingly important to UK consumers, according to a recent PAGB survey. Consumers would also like more information about how products should be recycled and are open to the idea of electronic product information.

Sustainable self-care options are moving to the forefront of priorities for UK healthcare consumers according to a survey by the country's OTC industry association, PAGB.

Almost half (47%) of the 2,000 UK adults polled by PAGB said that a self-care company's clearly stated commitment to environmentally sustainable processes would positively influence their buying decisions.

Almost as many (42%) said they would be more likely to buy a particular brand of OTC medicine if all the packaging could be recycled.

"It is encouraging to see that consumers are considering the environmental impact when self-treating for common conditions," commented PAGB CEO Michelle Riddalls. "PAGB and our members are committed to supporting the UK consumer healthcare industry to drive environmentally sustainable self-care."

In addition to sustainable manufacturing and recycled packaging, UK consumers also want improvements to the way that information is presented to them on packaging and patient information leaflets (PILs).

Around three quarters (76%) of respondents said that they would like recycling information

included on medicines packaging to help understand what they can recycle.

A majority (85%) already recycle any cardboard or paper packaging from the medicines they use, PAGB reported.

ePILs

Consumers are also open to the idea of electronic patient information (ePILs), PAGB found.

While a significant proportion of respondents still expressed a preference for printed PILs, a majority (58%) said they don't have a preference or would rather read the patient information online.

“There is support for change,” noted Riddalls. “The introduction of ePILs can help the UK consumer industry to be more sustainable and is an area in which PAGB is actively engaged.”

The introduction of ePILs is a priority for PAGB in its collaboration with the Sustainable Medicines Partnership – a “not-for-profit, public-private, multi-stakeholder global action collaborative” that it has joined alongside Hialeon and Teva Pharmaceuticals.

Aimed at building “science-based, scalable, sustainable solutions to help reduce the waste of medicines and the waste from medicines,” the partnership has already made some progress on this project. (Also see "[Hialeon, Teva And PAGB Join UK Sustainable Medicines Partnership](#)" - HBW Insight, 14 Oct, 2022.)

Working On It

A roundtable report earlier this year set the UK pharmaceutical industry a target of introducing digital medicines information in some form as the default mode of communication with patients and consumers by 2025.

Elsewhere, the European Medicines Agency has introduced a common standard for ePILs on medicines marketed within the European Union. (Also see "[EU Regulatory News Round Up: NSAIDs During Pregnancy, Estragole Excipients, ePILs](#)" - HBW Insight, 4 May, 2022.)

“We are excited and supportive of the great innovative work some of our members are doing in this area together with other organisations such as the Sustainable Medicines Partnership,” Riddalls said. “We know that there is a great momentum to share and progress on this front.”

Such initiatives show that companies are responding to consumer desire to for sustainable self-care sustainably, which PAGB’s survey reveals.

“The good news is that industry is already responding to make this a reality,” Riddalls concluded.