



PHA/JFD/IEA.9

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## PHA Information Exchange System

## ALERT

COUNTERFEIT STEROID CREAMS AND LOTIONS

*The Medicines Control Agency of the United Kingdom has informed the World Health Organization of the sale of counterfeit steroid creams in Afro/Caribbean communities. The relevant extract is quoted below:*

"The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain has informed the Medicines Control Agency that during enquiries carried out by their inspectors into the unlawful sale of steroid creams and lotions they have identified some counterfeit medicines.

"These sales, in retail shops in the Afro/Caribbean communities, are alleged to have been made by the shop keepers concerned for the purposes of lightening the skin. Many of the creams proved to be counterfeit, containing little or no active ingredient and are not the product of the companies concerned. The retailers maintain that they were sold the products for cash by itinerant salesmen/women who, it was alleged, were of West African origin.

"The products at present include:

- Dermovate Cream (bearing some Arabic lettering)
- Dermovate Soap
- Betnovate N Cream
- Betnovate Lotion (bearing some Arabic lettering)
- Betneval Creme (ostensibly from France)
- Topsyne Gel (ostensibly from France)
- Topsyn (ostensibly from Italy)
- Topifram Cream (ostensibly from France)
- Diprosone Cream (ostensibly from France)

"Enquiries are continuing. There is no evidence at present that these products are in the legitimate pharmaceutical distribution chain in the United Kingdom, but pharmacists have been alerted."

*Reference: Communication from the Medicines Control Agency, London, 21 November 1989.*

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