



PHA/JFD/IEA.13

26 September 1990

PHA Information Exchange Service

ALERT

**WARNING RE BATCH OF
DIETHYLENE GLYCOL MISLABELLED AS PROPYLENE GLYCOL
USED IN PARACETAMOL SYRUP**

The Dutch and Nigerian Ministries of Health have informed the World Health Organization that a batch of 5-litre containers has been discovered in Nigeria labelled as **propylene glycol**, some of which in fact contained the more toxic **diethylene glycol**. The full label states:

"Propyleneglycol
Drug Pharm V
Industriële Handelsmaatschappij
Almere Haven
Holland

Batch number: 850304-4959-1"

The contents of these containers have been used in the preparation of paracetamol cough syrup, intended for the treatment of common cold symptoms in children.

Consumption of this syrup has been associated with severe toxicity, resulting in more than 100 fatalities in young children in Nigeria. The Ministry of Health in Nigeria has urged health professionals and the public not to use paracetamol syrup, but tablets instead for the time being.

It cannot be excluded that similarly mislabelled containers are circulating in other parts of the world.

Reference: Telefax from the Ministry of Health, Rijswijk, Netherlands, 21 September 1990, and telephone communication with the Ministry of Health, Lagos, Nigeria, 25 September 1990.

* * *