

May 10, 2011

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### Dear Working Group Member,

We would like to share several updates relevant to the OCs OTC Working Group. First, the Women's Health Practice and Research Network of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy recently published an opinion statement on this topic in the journal *Pharmacotherapy*. The abstract is below, and the full article is available on the [working group's website](#).

We would also like to solicit your help as we begin to collect information about the global availability of OCs in pharmacies without a prescription. As described below, we are conducting an online survey to collect information about the situation in other countries, and we would appreciate your help forwarding information about the survey to your international colleagues.

Finally, we wanted to highlight a great [Perspective piece](#) in the current issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* that clearly articulates how contraception is a cost-saving preventive health service. As an [Institute of Medicine panel](#) deliberates about which services should be included as preventive care services to women without cost as part of health reform, we hope they will consider all FDA-approved contraceptives, including both non-prescription and prescription methods, in this category.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about any of these topics.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan", is positioned below the text "Thanks,".

Daniel Grossman  
Senior Associate, Ibis Reproductive Health

## Changing Oral Contraceptives from Prescription to Over-the-Counter Status: An Opinion Statement of the Women's Health Practice and Research Network of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy

Jennifer McIntosh, Pharm.D., M.H.S., Sally Rafie, Pharm.D., Mitzi Wasik, Pharm.D., Sarah McBane, Pharm.D., Nicole M. Lodise, Pharm.D., Shareen Y. El-Ibiary, Pharm.D., Alicia Forinash, Pharm.D., Marlowe Djuric Kachlic, Pharm.D., Emily Rowe, Pharm.D., and Kathy Besinque, Pharm.D., M.S.Ed., FASHP

[Click here](#) for the full article

Addressing the issue of unintended pregnancy is a national priority. One proposed strategy to reduce unintended pregnancy is to improve access to oral contraceptives by changing them to over-the-counter (OTC) status. Existing data indicate that oral contraceptives meet safety criteria required of OTC products. Available literature demonstrates that women can self-screen for contraindications to oral contraceptives and can do this as well as clinicians, and experience with OTC emergency contraception suggests that OTC oral contraceptives would not increase sexual risk-taking behavior. Women support OTC access to oral contraceptives, but express an interest in accessing pharmacist counseling. On the basis of these data, the Women's Health Practice and Research Network of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy supports changing oral contraceptives to OTC status under two conditions: that they are sold where a pharmacist is on duty and that there are mechanisms in place to cover OTC contraceptives through Medicaid. Future research should address the issues of out-of-pocket costs to individuals, label-comprehension studies, and models for pharmacist reimbursement for time spent counseling on contraception.

*(Pharmacotherapy 2011;31(4):424-437)*

## Survey on Global Availability of Oral Contraceptives without a Prescription

The Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group is conducting a brief survey to learn about OTC access to OCs in countries around the world. If you have information about the availability of OCs in countries outside the US or have colleagues who might have such information, we would appreciate your help collecting this information. The survey is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#) and can be accessed via the links below. Please feel free to forward information about the survey to your colleagues. Responses will contribute to a world map of OTC availability of OCs, which will be posted on our [website](#), and the information will also be helpful to learn about how OTC availability works in real-life situations.

English: [www.surveymonkey.com/OCsOTC](http://www.surveymonkey.com/OCsOTC)

Spanish: [www.surveymonkey.com/pastillasanticconceptivas](http://www.surveymonkey.com/pastillasanticconceptivas)

French: [www.surveymonkey.com/contraceptionorale](http://www.surveymonkey.com/contraceptionorale)

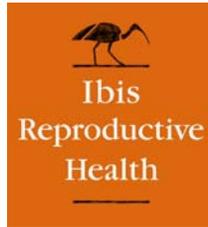
## Family Planning as a Cost-Saving Preventive Health Service

Cleland K, Peipert JF, Westhoff C, Spear S, Trussell J. *N Engl J Med.* 2011 May 5;364(18):e37. [Click here](#) to access

## About Us

The Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group is an informal coalition of reproductive health and rights organizations, nonprofit research and advocacy groups, university-based researchers, and prominent clinicians who share an interest in women's health and access to contraception. Our goal is to evaluate objectively the risks and benefits of demedicalizing contraceptive care, with an eye toward improving access to OCs and potentially other hormonal contraceptive methods by making them available without a prescription.

The working group is coordinated by Ibis Reproductive Health.



[www.ibisreproductivehealth.org](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org)

## Contact Us

**For questions or inquiries, please contact us at:**

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