



SMI

New Zealand Self-Medication
Industry Association Inc.

**TAKING CARE OF YOUR OWN
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**



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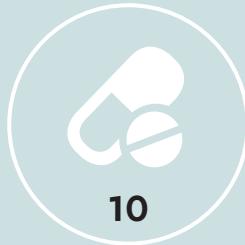
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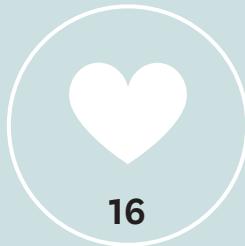
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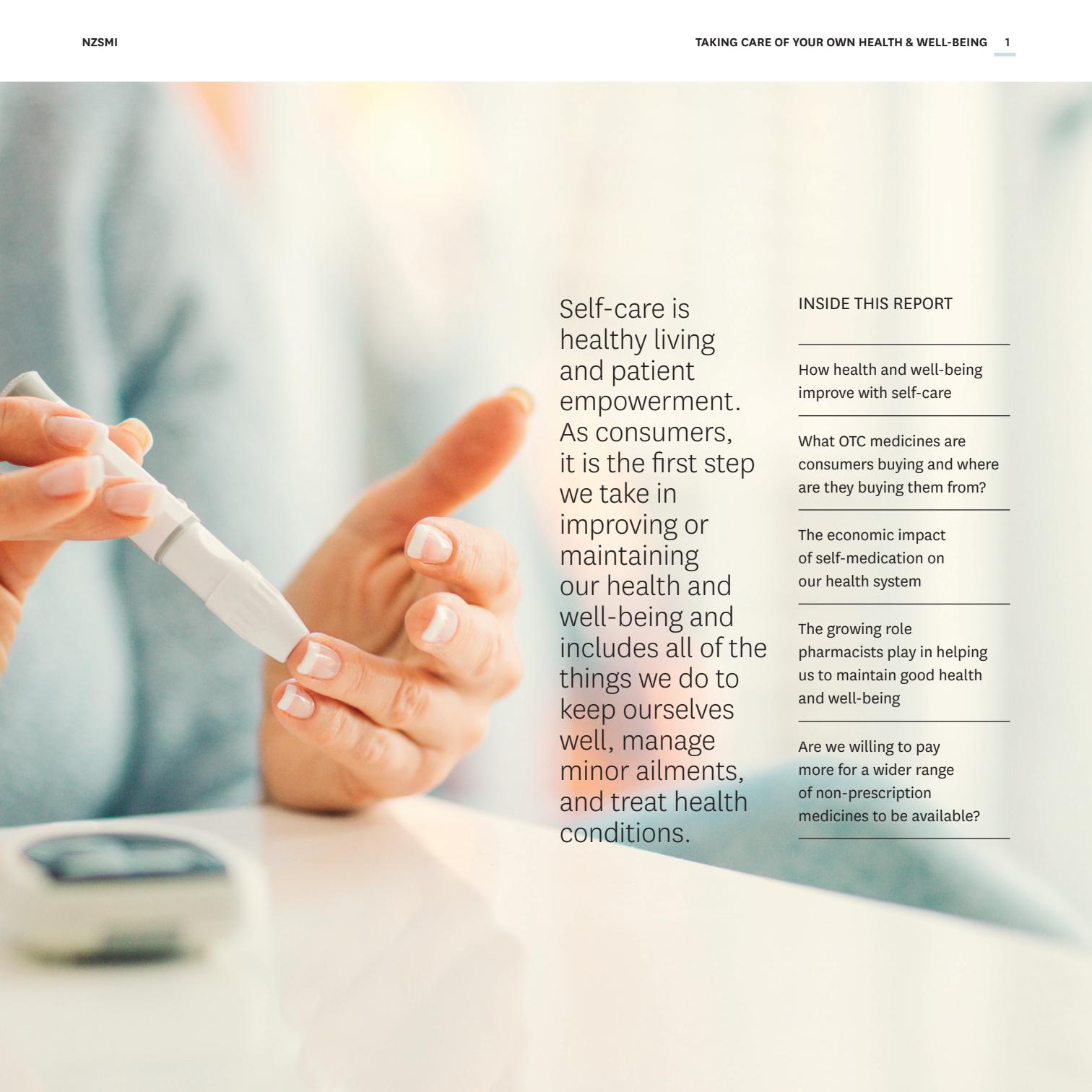
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Self-care is healthy living and patient empowerment. As consumers, it is the first step we take in improving or maintaining our health and well-being and includes all of the things we do to keep ourselves well, manage minor ailments, and treat health conditions.

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01

FOREWORD FROM SCOTT MILNE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NEW ZEALAND SELF MEDICATION INDUSTRY



Through technology and greater access to information and therapies, we are better equipped to understand, and manage our own health than ever before. We regularly make informed choices about maintaining and improving our own physical and mental health and well-being.

This publication looks at survey findings and discusses the value of self-care and self-medication to consumers. We also examine the likely impact of OTC medicines on our healthcare system, and the economy, and look at ways to grow the understanding and uptake of self-care in New Zealand.

As New Zealanders we are enjoying longer and healthier lives, and for many of us, self-care is the first step we take to keeping ourselves fit and healthy, treating minor ailments and managing chronic conditions. Self-care empowers us to proactively look after our own physical and mental health and well-being, and that of our whanau, family and friends.

In addition to keeping us well, improving our general health and supporting us to live our lives to its full potential, self-care also helps to ensure we have a sustainable healthcare system in an increasingly challenging environment.

The demands on our healthcare system are growing – we have an ageing population and an increasing prevalence of chronic disease, with many older people living longer with co-morbidities. This places huge pressure on our families and communities, and our healthcare system to support people to live well, while ensuring that our system is sustainable and equitable.

Given these challenges it is more important than ever that consumers are provided with the tools to enable them to take a responsible approach to their own healthcare to enable them to live well, for longer.

The New Zealand Self-Medication Industry (NZSMI) is encouraged by the current Government's commitment to putting people's well-being at the heart of its policies and their understanding that by prioritising well-being now, we are laying the foundations for New Zealanders to have better lives for decades to come.ⁱ

NZSMI recently commissioned a survey to understand New Zealander's behaviour and perceptions around self-care and over the counter (OTC) or non-prescription medicines, including the use of vitamins and health and wellness supplements.

The survey results show that while around 1/3 of us believe we would visit our GP when we felt ill, what the majority of people actually do is purchase a non-prescription medicine from their local pharmacy or supermarket to see if that helps to improve their health.ⁱⁱ If their symptoms don't improve after taking a self-care medicine, most New Zealanders would then visit their GP.

“Self-care empowers us to proactively look after our own physical and mental health and well-being, and that of our whanau, family and friends”

Not surprisingly, the survey found that painkillers are the most commonly purchased product, with over two thirds of New Zealanders buying these at their local pharmacy or supermarket. The survey also found that we are initially more likely to purchase an OTC medicine to treat minor ailments such as cough, cold, runny nose, headache and pain, than visit a GP.ⁱⁱ

These results present us with an opportunity. NZSMI believes that by focusing on empowering more individuals, families and whanau to proactively manage their own health, we can help support the health and wellness of New Zealanders, and reduce the financial burden on our healthcare system.



SCOTT MILNE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NZSMI

02

ABOUT THE RESEARCH & RESULTS AT A GLANCE

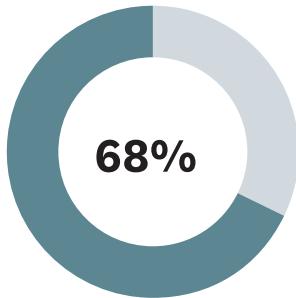


ABOUT THE RESEARCH

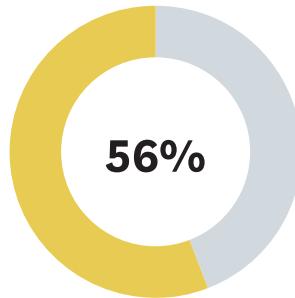
The New Zealand Self-Medication Industry (NZSMI) commissioned Perceptive Research to conduct a survey of the general public to look at their behaviour and perceptions around self care, over the counter medicines, vitamins and health and well-being supplements.

This was conducted as an online survey in August 2018 and resulted in a total of 1,081 responses from adults aged 18 years and older. The data is weighted according to NZ Census statistics around age, and gender.ⁱⁱ

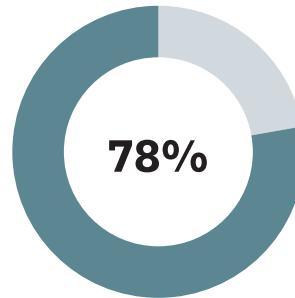
SOME KEY SURVEY RESULTS AT A GLANCE



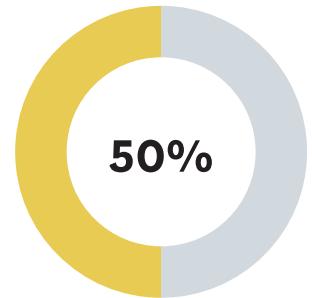
68% of New Zealanders purchase an OTC medicine to deal with a minor ailment, with visiting a GP or purchasing a prescription medicine as a secondary solution



56% of consumers are prepared to pay more for a wider range of OTC medicines to be available



78% of consumers purchase painkillers over the counter – the most commonly purchased OTC medicine in New Zealand



50% of consumers would visit their GP if their symptoms still remained after using an OTC medicine

03

**SELF-CARE: EMPOWERING
CONSUMERS TO TAKE CARE
OF THEIR OWN HEALTH**

Taking responsibility or caring for our ‘own’ health and well-being is not a new concept. A large number of kiwis enjoy good health throughout their life, want to live longer and also more productively.

As part of the OECD Better Life Index, which compares well-being across 35 countries, 88% of New Zealanders reported that we were in good or very good health, when asked the question in 2017 ‘how is your health in general?’ⁱⁱⁱ

Improved levels of health literacy, greater access to treatments and information, new technologies and increased public awareness about lifestyle factors and self-care needed to maintain good health all helps more of us to proactively look after ourselves.

NZSMI says “Self-care is about healthy living and patient empowerment. It is the first step we take in improving or maintaining our health and well-being. It includes all of the things we do to keep ourselves well, manage minor ailments, and treat health conditions.

“As we live longer and the number of chronic health conditions increase and become more complicated, our health and disability landscape will be more complex. The system will face a number of challenges and the value self-care provides in managing these challenges cannot be underestimated.

“Self-care, is in essence, the most widely available form of healthcare. It is a relatively broad concept, and includes the safe and responsible use of non-prescription medicines that can be purchased from a pharmacy or retail outlet such as a local supermarket. These medicines, commonly called ‘over the counter’ (OTC) medicines, allow individuals to address and treat ailments at an early stage, limit the severity of symptoms, and manage chronic conditions.

“OTC medicines play a key role in helping us get well, stay well and live well. They provide consumers with the independence to make decisions about their health. The NZSMI survey clearly shows that, amid a changing healthcare landscape, the majority of consumers recognise the benefits of using OTC medicines as a first line treatment for dealing with their minor ailments.

A review of the value of self-medication in the 2018 Journal of Medical Economics refers to the benefits of self-care. They include increased access to effective treatments, reduced visits to GP's which alleviates pressure on the healthcare system, increased productivity levels, increased patient independence and reduced costs to third-party payers such as government and insurance companies.^{iv}

"OTC medicines are critical to our healthcare system and empower people to take greater control of their own health choices. In addition, they also facilitate the better use of a pharmacist's clinical skills, increase access to medications for common conditions, and contribute to reducing the costs associated with prescribed medicines, such as GP visits."

"If OTC medicines were not available the consequences would be significant. The survey results indicate that most consumers would visit their GP for treatment and a medicine prescription, undoubtedly resulting in unnecessary cost and resource pressures being placed on our primary health system."

With around 12 million GP consultations per year in New Zealand^v, the responsible use of self-medication assists in providing an alternative for consumers seeking medical treatment for more common ailments. This ensures GP's can focus on treating the more serious health conditions and illnesses that have a large impact on individuals and public health.

In fact, the survey found that consumers would like a greater range of OTC medicines to be available, with over 50% willing to pay more money for a wider range of medicines.ⁱⁱ This is surprising as paying more for a product tends to go against our natural purchasing behaviour. However, the results strongly indicate that consumers feel empowered as OTC medicines allow them to take control of their health, enabling them to manage symptoms and treat minor ailments.

The importance of empowering individuals, families and whanau to manage their own medicines and health is recognised in the Government action plan: *Implementing Medicines New Zealand 2015 to 2020* which outlines a number of actions that will drive greater health outcomes.^{vi}



04

WHY NEW ZEALANDERS BUY NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES



Consumers regularly purchase OTC medicines to provide timely treatment for their health symptoms and minor ailments. OTC medicines are considered accessible and affordable. They provide a sense of empowerment – they allow us to take a proactive approach to managing our own health.^{vii}

The NZSMI survey shows that the majority of New Zealanders purchase an OTC medicine as a first action when they are feeling ill or needing to treat a symptom for a minor ailment.

Common colds, headaches, back, muscle pain and digestive complaints are among the most common ailments we tend to treat with an OTC medicine, with 33% of respondents buying a non-prescription medicine for a cough, cold, sore throat, chest cold or runny nose. In addition, 32% of those surveyed purchased a product that would alleviate their headache, migraine, period pain or dental pain.ⁱⁱ

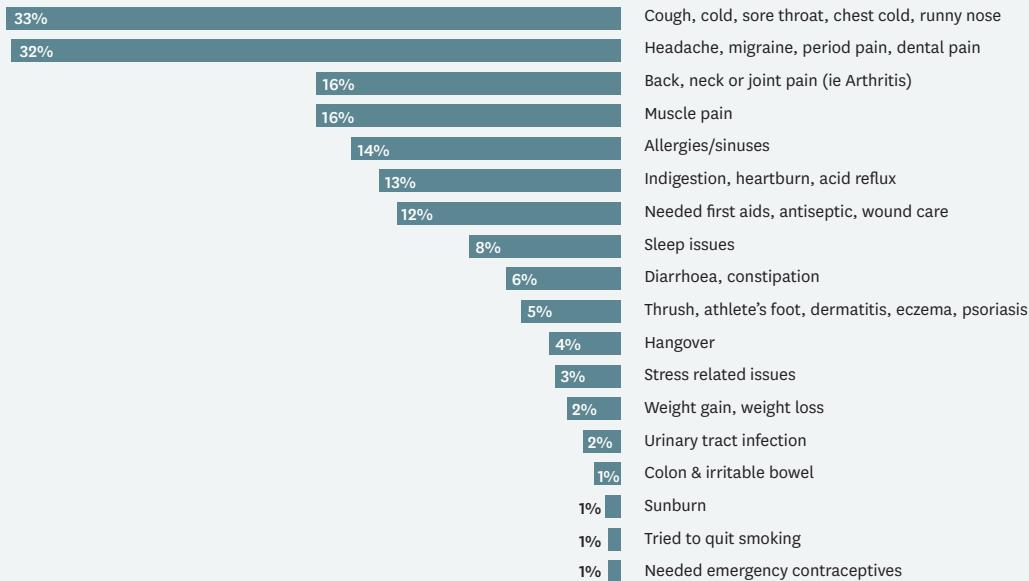
Allergies, indigestion, first aid and sleep issues are also key reasons why adults visit their pharmacy or other retail outlet to purchase OTC medicines.

The survey showed that females aged over 18 years are significantly more likely to purchase OTC medicines for their aches and pains than men. Younger adults, those aged between 25 – 35 years, are also more likely to purchase medicines to treat common cold symptoms and stress related issues than those aged over 65.ⁱ

CEO of the New Zealand Pharmacy Guild, Andrew Gaudin says that because pharmacies are open long hours, patients can go in and speak to a trained professional without the need for an appointment. “This flexibility tends to suit the younger generation. Although younger people may have lower medical need and may not necessarily be suffering from an enduring or significant medical condition, this age group tends to want to treat their symptoms rather than either waiting to see their GP, using a home remedy or simply doing nothing.

Scott Milne, Executive Director of NZSMI adds “Consumers are definitely more aware of their health and well-being and they have a greater understanding about possible treatment options for when they feel unwell.

WHY NEW ZEALANDERS BUY NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES



Because OTC products are readily available at a local pharmacy or supermarket, consumers are more inclined to treat their own minor ailments to make themselves feel better.

The World Self-Medication Industry (WSMI) conducted a study to understand the different influences on self-care behaviour and what motivates consumers to purchase different OTC products.

WSMI concluded that there are numerous influences on a consumer's decision to purchase a product to alleviate the symptoms of a minor illness and the decision-making process itself is sophisticated relative to how purchase decisions are made for many other consumer goods.

Once a person recognises that they need healthcare, they tend to seek out information to assess their options. Key sources of information for what they should purchase to alleviate their symptoms comes from their health professionals, such as their pharmacist or GP and also recommendations from their friends and family.^{viii}

“The decision-making process that people employ to address a health need is considerably more deliberate than one might imagine. There are many inputs to the final actions taken and they are all important to understanding how people behave in response to an identified health need.”

WSMI - UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCES ON SELF-CARE BEHAVIOUR

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WHAT ARE WE BUYING OTC MEDICINES FOR?



OTC products, along with vitamins and health supplements, are used daily by New Zealanders to proactively manage their own health and well-being and treat minor health problems in a way that does not require a prescription.

The NZSMI survey reveals that the OTC products which we buy the most are painkillers, with over 78% of adults buying them to ease their symptoms and treat minor ailments.ⁱⁱ

The second most commonly purchased products are those that complement our general well-being. 64% of adults reported purchasing vitamins, supplements and natural remedies. This suggests that lifestyle factors including the desire to lose weight, improve energy and sleep patterns, motivates consumers to take responsibility for improving and maintaining their health.

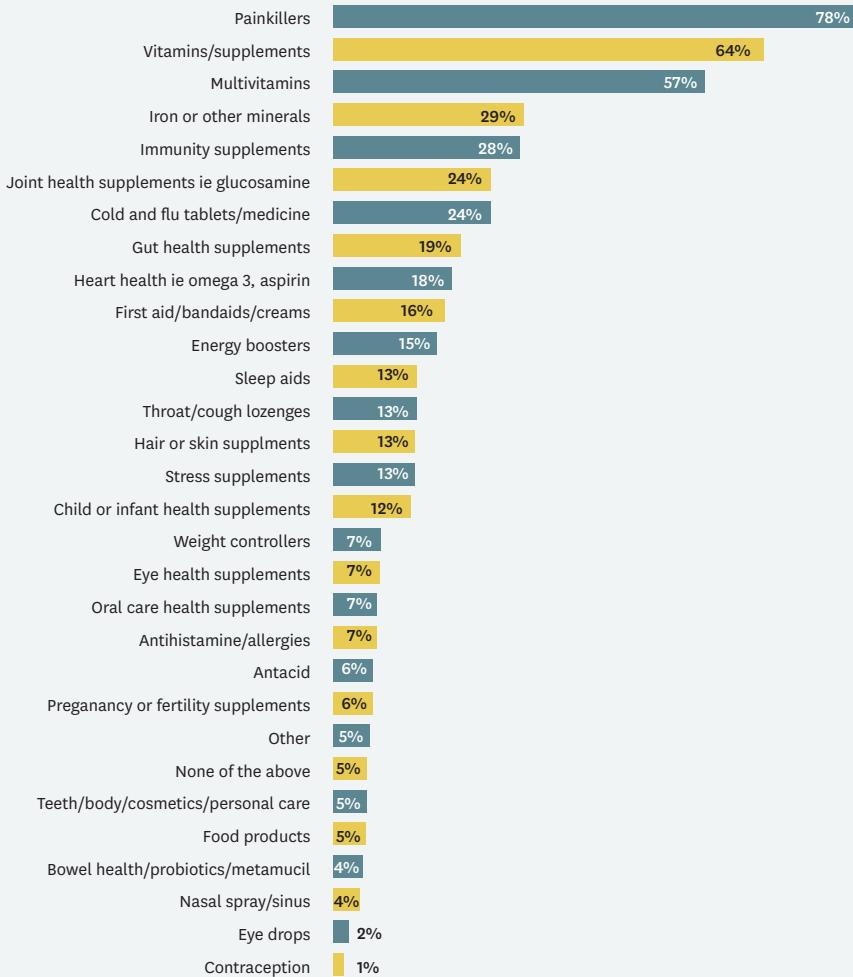
Females are much more likely than males (83% vs. 44%) to purchase complementary healthcare supplements with 57% of consumers buying multivitamins, 29% purchasing products to boost their iron intake, and 28% to assist with their immunity.ⁱⁱ

The survey also shows that as consumers get older, they purchase less painkillers and cold and flu medicines from their local pharmacy or retail outlet. However, the proportion of those taking health supplements increases with 59% of consumers aged 65 – 74 years using complementary healthcare products to improve and maintain their health and well-being.ⁱⁱ

Scott Milne says the products New Zealanders buy over the counter are no different to those from around the world. “When looking at other countries, we are purchasing the same type of products to treat exactly the same ailments as people in the UK, Australia, America, India and Spain.^{ix}

“Like these other countries, a large majority of New Zealanders are using OTC products to treat minor ailments. Supporting responsible self-medication allows individuals to take ownership of their own health and well-being.

WHAT ARE WE BUYING OTC MEDICINES FOR?



The survey results indicate consumers prefer the convenience of readily available medicines such as painkillers and cold and flu products to the process of visiting their GP for a prescription.

“NZSMI is determined to work with pharmacists and the regulator to ensure consumers are aware that OTC medicines are safe and effective for use without a doctor’s prescription.

Andrew Gaudin of the Pharmacy Guild says that community pharmacists play an important role in addressing people’s health needs.

“Because pharmacies are open long hours patients can go and speak with a trained professional without the need for an appointment. As a trusted health provider, they can provide advice on the correct use of medicines to improve health outcomes”.

06

**WHERE ARE WE BUYING
OTC MEDICINES FROM?**

For a wide range of minor illnesses, consumers prefer to purchase an OTC medicine to relieve their symptoms, choosing to buy them from either their pharmacy, supermarket or other retail outlet, rather than visit their GP.

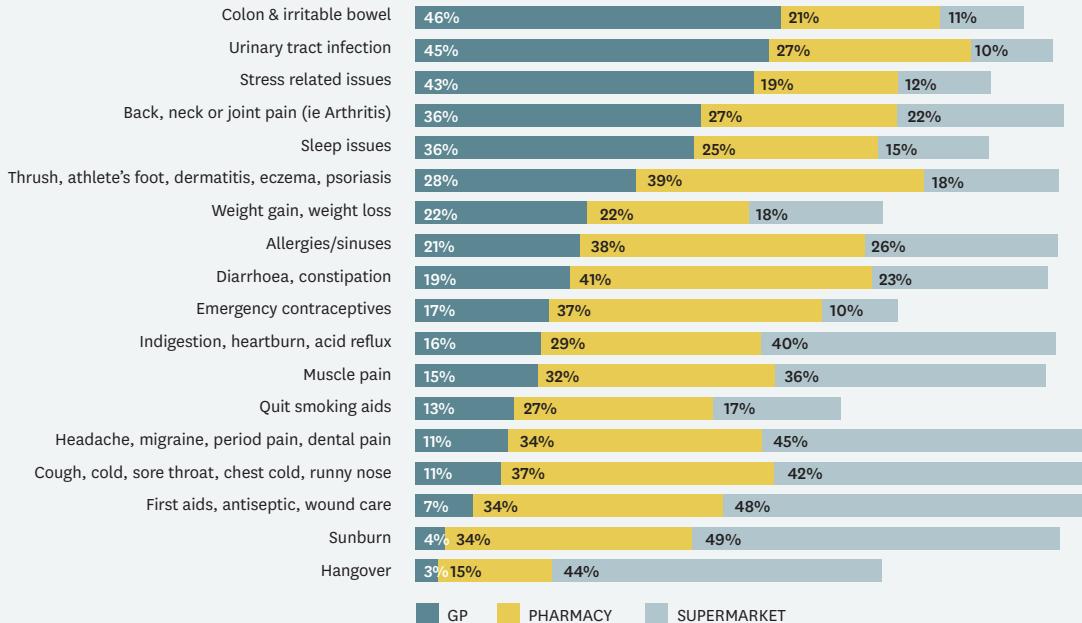
The NZSMI survey found that consumers wishing to buy OTC medicines to treat their aches, pains, coughs, colds, first aid needs, indigestion, and sunburn will do so from their supermarket. However, for more complex ailments such as thrush and athlete's foot, diarrhoea, constipation, allergies and emergency contraceptives, the preference is to buy them from a pharmacy.ⁱⁱ

Scott Milne, Executive Director of NZSMI says these results clearly indicate that as consumers become more knowledgeable about their health and available treatment options, they have also become more conscious about where they buy their OTC medicines from.

“Consumers definitely value the assistance, advice and information pharmacists can provide about the use of non-prescription medicines to help treat particular ailments. Constipation for example can have a variety of causes, and as such might require a range of different treatments. A pharmacist can discuss what other medications a consumer might be taking to ensure that the particular remedy is right for that patient's circumstances or symptoms. By contrast, these results show that we are sufficiently confident in our own knowledge when purchasing products to help manage symptoms for the more common ailments such as headaches and colds.

“The survey also shows that for other more serious ailments, such as irritable bowel complaints, urinary tract infections and stress or sleep related issues, consumers would prefer to seek advice from their GP. 50% of consumers will also go to their GP if, after they have been taking an OTC medicine, their symptoms haven't improved, they have worsened (37%) or new symptoms have developed (8%).ⁱⁱ

WHERE ARE WE BUYING OTC MEDICINES FROM?



“The OTC market has definitely been stimulated by consumer demand for making certain medicines available without the requirement for a prescription.

“In recent years, New Zealand has had a number of medicines become available over the counter that have traditionally only been available with a prescription. For example, emergency contraceptives and erectile dysfunction products are now available from pharmacies, providing consumers convenient access to those products.

“The NZSMI survey revealed that 37% of respondents would purchase their emergency contraceptives from their pharmacy with only 17% choosing to visit their doctor for treatment. Not only does this give consumers timely access to these medications, but they can be safely prescribed by a pharmacist without a visit to their GP.ⁱⁱ

“The survey did not ask respondents about whether they purchased products online, however along with the growing appetite for self-medication we would expect to see an increasing trend to purchase OTC medicines online.

07

**COMMENTARY FROM
NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST
PHARMACY GROUP**

Green Cross Health, one of New Zealand's leading multi-disciplinary primary health care organisation which includes the Unichem and Life Pharmacy brands, is a strong advocate for ensuring New Zealanders can access responsible self-care treatments and advice.

Glenn Mills, General Manager of Green Cross Health Pharmacies and Professional Services, says NZ pharmacists are often the first port of call for health care in the community.

"The Pharmacy Action Plan 2016-2020 recognised the important role community pharmacy can play in the management of timely access to self-care, treatment of minor ailments and appropriate referral to GPs or other health professionals. This is what our pharmacists are doing every day in their community".

The role of easily accessible pharmacists is critical in a health system with multiple pressure points, including a shortage of GPs, which is exacerbated in rural areas. The sale of OTC medication to support self-care is a vital part of our health system and as part of the clinical care team in the community, Pharmacists have the skills to provide the care and advice to support responsible and best practice self-care.

As medicines specialists, pharmacists can ensure that wellness, OTC medications and prescription medicines can be taken safely together and provide advice and products specific to individual symptoms.

Raising awareness of the services and treatments available in community pharmacy is more important than ever to ensure consumers can access treatments in a timely manner. For example, the research showed the 27% of respondents prefer to visit their local pharmacy for treatments for urinary tract infections (UTIs)

Green Cross Health has been instrumental in supporting moves to reclassify medicines to enable pharmacists to treat issues such as UTIs and erectile dysfunction without the need for a GP prescription.

“Pharmacists are part of the primary health care team in their communities and it is encouraging to see awareness growing of the expanding range of services and treatments that people can access from their local pharmacy”

“But there are still many people who are not aware that Trimethoprim, an antibiotic for the treatment of urinary tract infections, is available from trained pharmacists, without a prescription needed from a GP. This is also the situation for a number of important services from flu vaccinations to the emergency contraceptive pill. NZ pharmacy aims to provide easy access to quality health care and advice to our communities and the need to access emergency contraceptive may not coincide with when an appointment is available with a local GP. NZ pharmacy welcomes the move by some DHBs to fund a consultation with the pharmacist for women under 25 years of age. The increase in funding lowers the barriers to access”

As OTC and self-care categories have extended into supermarkets, it becomes important for customers to understand that product ranges and options are limited compared to those available in a community pharmacy.

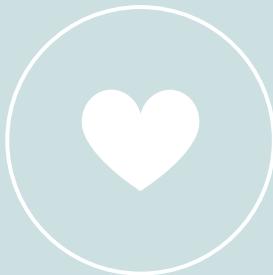
“For some customers treating symptoms for pain or allergy for example, a readily available off the shelf solution may be adequate, but there is no substitute for the expert knowledge of a pharmacist who may be able to suggest other treatments and of course, refer on to a GP or other health professional if they think it would be beneficial. Community pharmacy is the self-care access point for New Zealand’.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a white rectangular medicine box. The background is a blurred pharmacy shelf with various other medicine boxes. The lighting is bright and clinical.

As medicines specialists, pharmacists can ensure that wellness, OTC medications and prescription medicines can be taken safely together and provide advice and products specific to individual symptoms.

08

SELF-CARE: A WINNING FORMULA



The central concept of the New Health Strategy: Future Direction 2016 is ‘*all New Zealander’s live well, stay well and get well*’. While the objective of this strategy is to improve health outcomes for all New Zealander’s it also highlights wellness as a goal, acknowledging that people want not just a long life, but also quality of life so that they are well for as many years of their life as possible.^x

However, as we look to the future, we have a rapidly aging population with an average life expectancy of 82 years. This is 2 years higher than the OECD average, and combined with an increasing number of complex chronic conditions, our health system and communities face a number of challenges including escalating healthcare costs. As a country we need to adapt the way in which we deliver our health services.

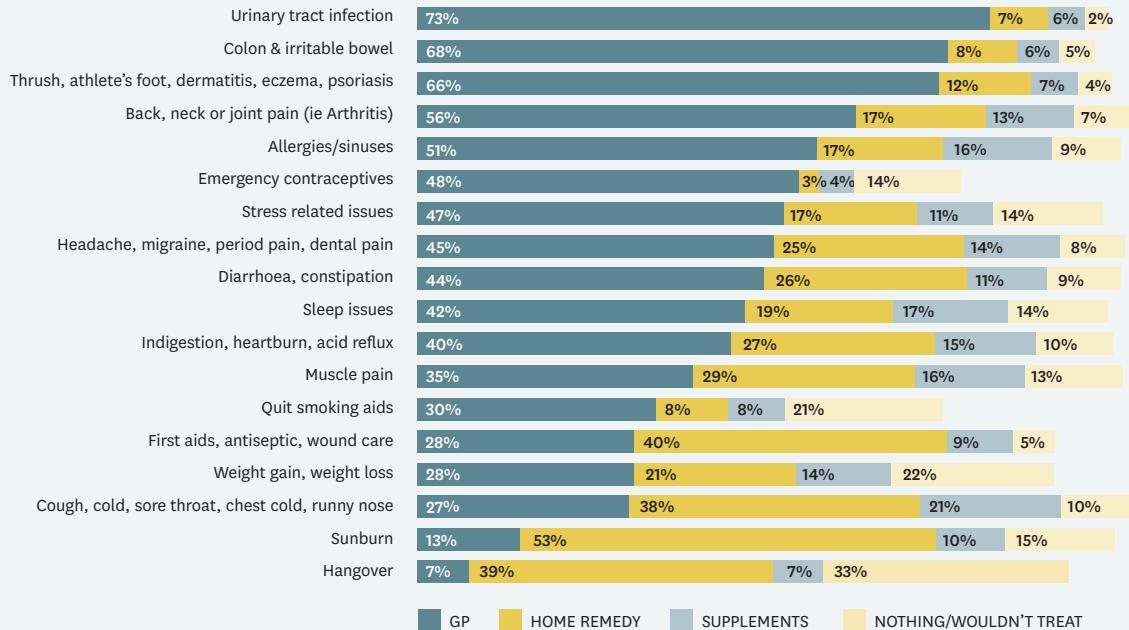
In 2018/19 the Government invested \$18.225b into our health and disability system, a significant investment making up about 1/5th of Government expenditure, to ensure all New Zealanders are supported to live well, stay well, and get well.^{xi}

Treasury estimates that if nothing were to change in the way we fund and deliver services, Government health spending would rise from about 7 percent of GDP now, to about 11 percent of GDP by 2060.ⁱ

However, we have many opportunities to help address these challenges. By focusing on preventing illness and supporting consumers to make healthy choices, we can help people to either avoid developing long-term health conditions, or to slow the development of those conditions.

Critical to this is recognising the important role that OTC medicines play in ensuring that our health resources are allocated where they are needed. Not only do OTC medicines provide greater treatment options, convenience and access to care for consumers, they also have proven economic benefits as well. The use of OTC medicines provides significant savings to both consumers and the healthcare system by reducing unnecessary GP visits for otherwise self-treatable conditions.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS IF OTC WAS NOT AVAILABLE



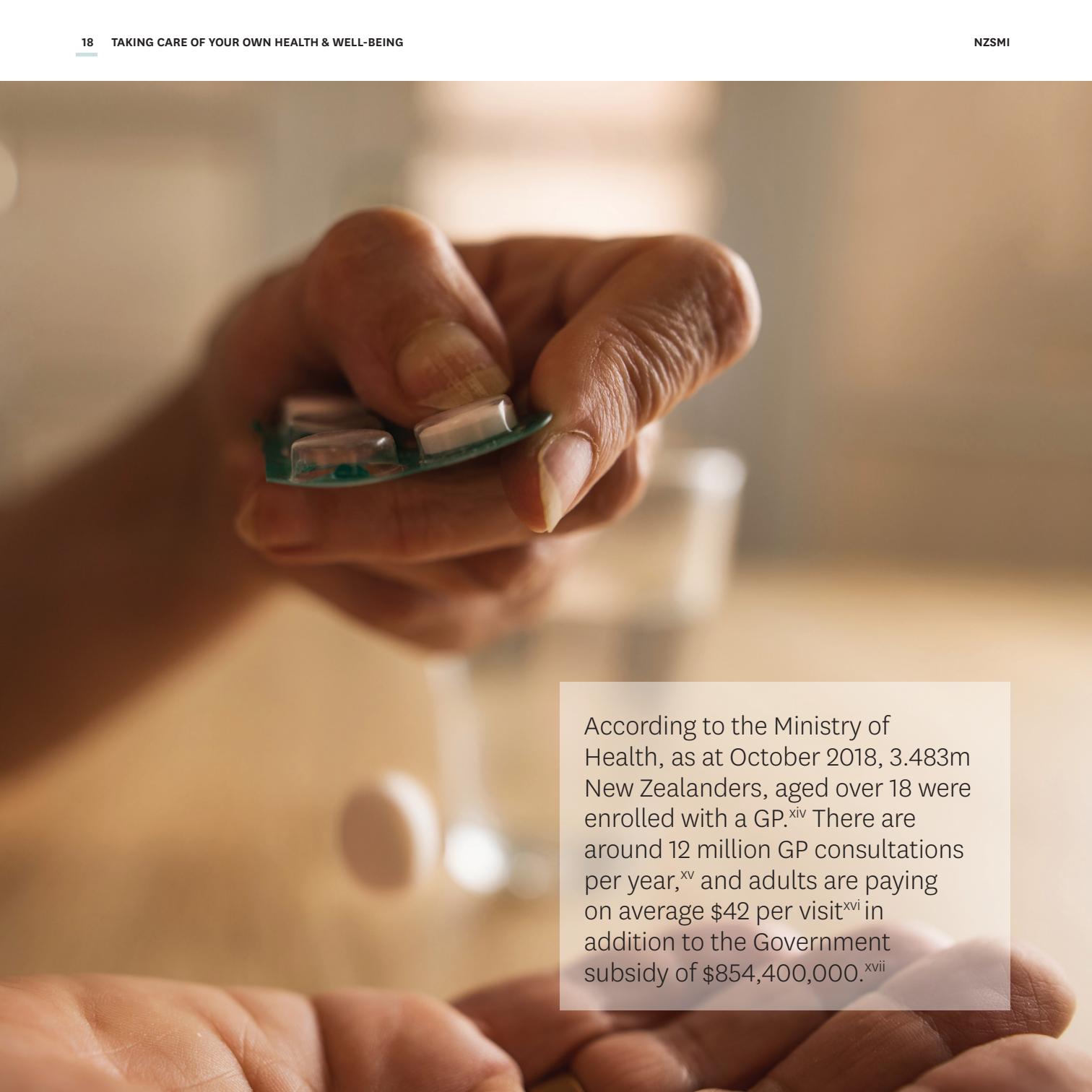
The NZSMI survey revealed that if faced with the unavailability of an OTC product, 27 – 73% of consumers would visit their GP for treatment depending on their medical conditions. This would result in GP's shouldering an increased burden and add to the growing overcrowding in waiting rooms in both GP clinics and our hospitals. Other options were to use a homemade remedy or not treat the ailment at all.ⁱⁱ The increase in consumers seeking prescriptions for self-treatable conditions would cause a surge in GP visits that would undoubtedly place pressure on, and probably cripple, our primary health system.

The social and economic value of self-care and self-medication are well documented and although no previous studies have been undertaken in New Zealand to measure the economic benefits, we can look to other countries as their results are

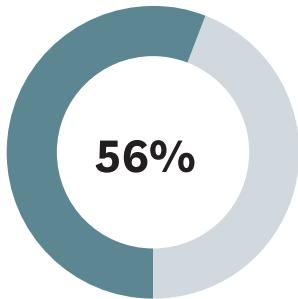
highly relevant. In the UK, it is estimated that up to 18% of GP workload relates to minor ailments at a cost of £2 billion annually. Similarly, the Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI) estimates that 25 million GP consultations are for minor ailments.^{xii}

A study conducted by Macquarie University in Australia found that with over 80% of adults and 40% of children using an OTC medicine in any one month, OTC medicines saves the Australian economy about \$10.4b per annum.^{xiii}

These results strongly suggest that OTC medicines provide financial benefits to healthcare systems, allow Governments to deliver resources to areas in need, and ensure GP's and other healthcare professionals can focus on the more difficult health priorities.



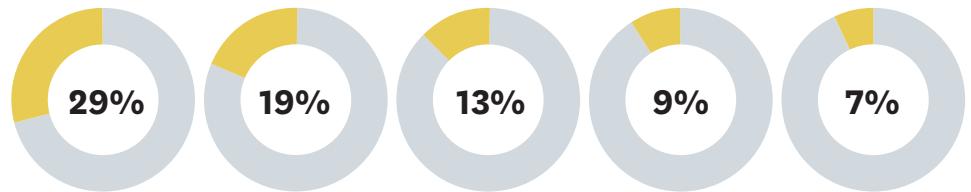
According to the Ministry of Health, as at October 2018, 3.483m New Zealanders, aged over 18 were enrolled with a GP.^{xiv} There are around 12 million GP consultations per year,^{xv} and adults are paying on average \$42 per visit^{xvi} in addition to the Government subsidy of \$854,400,000.^{xvii}



56% of consumers

would be prepared to pay more for a wider range of OTC medicines to be available.ⁱⁱ

WILLING TO PAY FOR MORE MEDICINE OTC



SAVE MONEY

FREE UP GP'S

A WIDER RANGE

EASIER

CONVENIENT

Scott Milne, Executive Director of NZSMI says: The survey results indicate that 56% of consumers would be prepared to pay more for a wider range of OTC medicines to be available.ⁱⁱ

“OTC medicines are among the products that consumers use on a regular basis. The fact that the majority of us are willing to pay more for a wider range clearly shows that consumers recognise the numerous benefits non-prescription medicines deliver not only to their own health and well-being but also to the broader health system.

“Paying more for a product tends to go against our natural purchasing behaviour, however, in this case it strongly indicates that consumers feel empowered that OTC medicines allow them to take control of their health, enabling them to manage symptoms and treat minor ailments.”

Demographically, those aged between 18 – 24 years would be much more willing to pay more to support a wider range of OTC medicines than those aged over 75 years. “I’m not all surprised by this - families live in a busy, fast-paced society, and increasingly we value convenience when we buy products. OTC medicines are easily accessible and provide a quick option to treat common ailments such as headaches, coughs, colds and allergies.

Of those who were willing to pay more, 29% said they would end up saving money and 19% believed that it would free up not only their GP’s time, but also their own time. One respondent said “*the time and cost of seeing a doctor, then a chemist rather than just making a purchase can be difficult to manage physically when unwell. It would also mean you could get a relative or friend to make the purchase for you.*”

09

**SAFETY, EFFICACY AND THE
FUTURE OF OTC MEDICINES**

New Zealand's regulatory authority for non-prescription medicines, Medsafe, has stringent policies and processes in place to ensure all OTC medicines in New Zealand are safe and effective for use by consumers.

NZSMI says that because Medsafe evaluates all the evidence required to ensure the safety and efficacy of medicines, consumers can be confident that the OTC medicines they buy from New Zealand retailers have been clinically assessed as safe and effective for use as per the instructions on the product label and package inserts.

Like other international regulators, Medsafe is also responsible for deciding which medicines are made available to consumers over the counter, which should be sold only based on a prescription, and which medicines should be shifted to the OTC market to provide consumers with a wider range of non-prescription medicines.

The process of a prescription medicine becoming an OTC medicine is often referred to as 'switching'. There are several advantages to increasing and broadening access to medicines: they are easier, faster and more convenient to obtain, can cost less than obtaining a prescription, empower patients to take a proactive approach to their own health and well-being and ease pressure on Government funding of medicines.

However, there are potential disadvantages of switching. The risks of misdiagnosis, medical misuse and abuse, adverse events and interaction with other medications are all challenges that must be addressed in the decision to switch the status of a medicine from prescription to OTC. The role of Medsafe is vital to ensure the robustness of decision making around switching.

While people are becoming increasingly confident to practice self-care and purchase medications to treat their own ailments, it is important that in order to exercise good judgement they are informed and educated appropriately. NZSMI's self-regulatory Code of Practice ensures all members provide balanced, accurate and objective claims about non-prescription medicines, firmly advocating and supporting the responsible use of self-medication.

In addition, the World Self-Medication Industry, of which NZSMI is a member, strongly emphasises that the role of labelling on OTC products is to provide all information necessary to enable an individual without medical training to use the medicine appropriately.

Because of their availability and close proximity to consumers who purchase OTC medications, pharmacists are often in the best position to provide information about the selection and use of OTC medications and related health care products. They are also on hand to provide information about possible interactions with other medicines, side effects, adverse reactions, instructions on how to take the particular medicine and remind consumers when they should seek the advice of their GP.

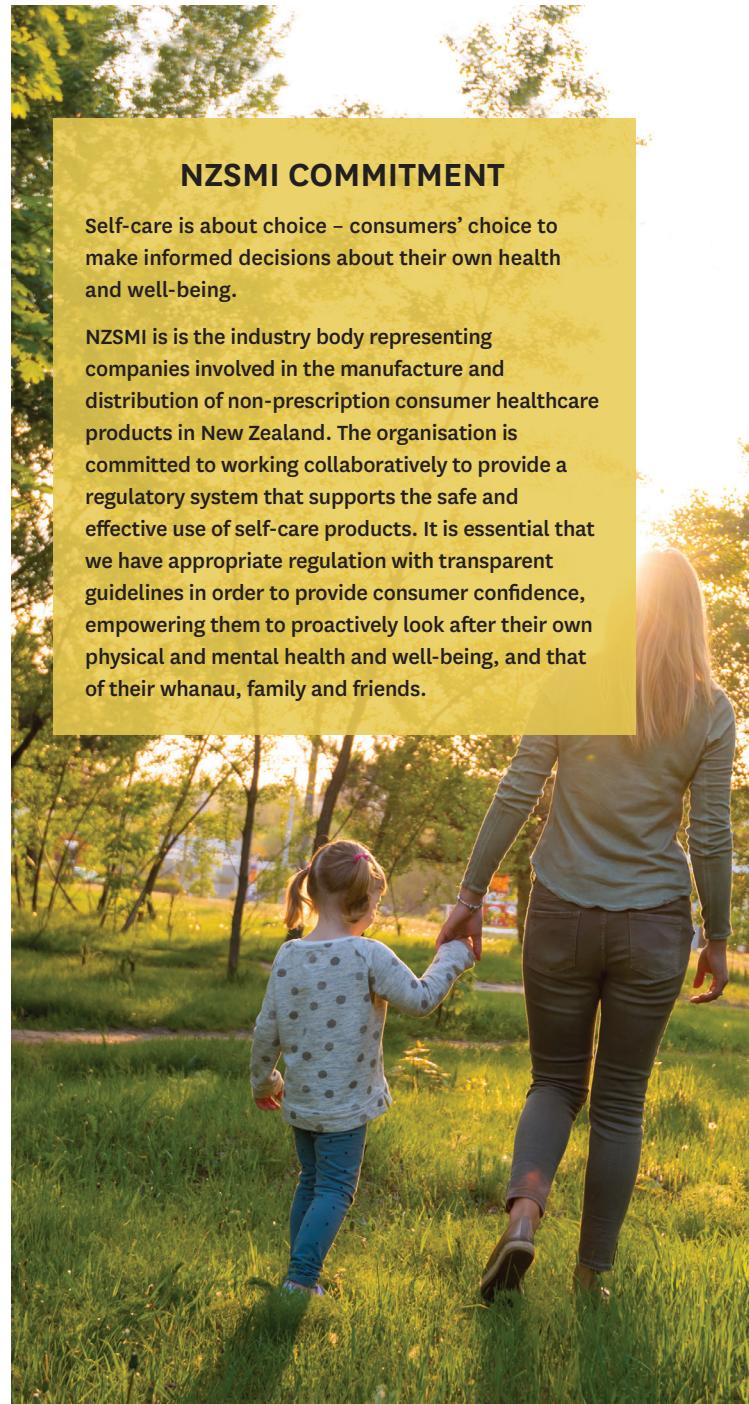
As the trend for self-medication grows so will the number of products available for OTC purchase increase. With newer, stronger and more effective medicines making their way onto pharmacy shelves, the role of the pharmacist in ensuring the safe and responsible use of these medicines is critical to ensure that consumers who wish to use them to treat minor ailments and improve health outcomes, can do so.

As the trend for self-medication grows so will the number of products available for OTC purchase increase.

NZSMI COMMITMENT

Self-care is about choice – consumers' choice to make informed decisions about their own health and well-being.

NZSMI is the industry body representing companies involved in the manufacture and distribution of non-prescription consumer healthcare products in New Zealand. The organisation is committed to working collaboratively to provide a regulatory system that supports the safe and effective use of self-care products. It is essential that we have appropriate regulation with transparent guidelines in order to provide consumer confidence, empowering them to proactively look after their own physical and mental health and well-being, and that of their whanau, family and friends.



10

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