

There are significant downsides to buying drugs that do not have the right mix of active ingredients, do not have any active ingredients, or have different inert ingredients that pose drug interaction problems for patients. For this Internet pharmacy, all risk is clearly assumed by the buyer. This includes financial risk! There are many rumors that these illegal Internet pharmacies sell your financial information (MasterCard, Visa, or other payment information) to third parties to use in the black market.

It was obvious that this Canadian pharmacy did not have a U.S. location, was not a verified pharmacy practice site, and did not require a prescription from a physician. It did have a real person, so this Internet pharmacy scored one out of four on the WebMD four signs for legitimacy for Internet pharmacy sites.

---

## **THE FDA, THE U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, AND INTERNET PHARMACIES**

Even before the Drug Quality and Security Act, the FDA and the U.S. Justice Department were trying to combat illegal Internet pharmacies. On August 25, 2011, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Google agreed to pay \$500 million to avoid Justice Department prosecution on charges that it knowingly accepted illegal advertisements from Canadian online pharmacies for years.<sup>6</sup> Stopping the ads and the support targeting consumers in the United States is certainly one step in the right direction.

As my example showed, using search engines to inquire about Internet pharmacies and the buying of prescription drugs online still resulted in a slew of Internet pharmacy sites being referenced. Certainly, more was and still is needed to inhibit access to these drugs.

---

## **THE DRUG QUALITY AND SECURITY ACT AND ILLEGAL INTERNET PHARMACIES**

As we discussed in Chapter 4, the Drug Quality and Security Act requires that supply chain participants set up the proper systems to verify a product identifier for every pharmaceutical drug package they handle. All supply