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## News Release

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### **AILING AUSSIES OPT FOR SELF-MEDICATION OVER DOCTOR'S ADVICE**

- **Headaches, sleeping problems and back ache most common health complaints for Australians**
- **Few Aussie consumers influenced by health-related advertising**

**Sydney, 28 August 2007:** A health survey conducted by The Nielsen Company has found that headaches, sleeping problems and back ache are the most common ailments of Australians, and when it comes to their treatment in an industry estimated to be worth over US\$70 billion globally, consumers are loyal and habitual purchasers of over-the-counter (OTC) self-medication products.

According to the online Nielsen study of 26,486 consumers in 47 markets<sup>1</sup> from Europe, Asia Pacific, the Americas and the Middle East, (including 500 Australians) over half of those Australians polled (56%) claimed to have suffered a headache in the last four weeks, while more than one in three had experienced sleeping problems (35%) or suffered a back ache (35%).

“Headaches are by far the most common health complaint for Australians, and this may explain why analgesics are such a major category in the OTC market,” states Katherine Doric, Associate Director, Pharmacy, The Nielsen Company. “The OTC market in Australia is worth \$4 billion and analgesics make up eight percent of this.”

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<sup>1</sup> **47 Markets Covered:** Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Thailand, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, UAE, United Kingdom, US and Vietnam.



The last time they suffered an illness, most Australians (37%) said they reached for their usual ‘tried and tested’ medication at home, while 28 percent visited a pharmacy in search of an over-the-counter recommendation and 26 percent paid a visit to their doctor.

Of those who decided to purchase OTC medicines, the majority (54%) opted for a product or brand they always used, while 50 percent took their pharmacist’s recommendation on board. Just three percent of Australians said advertising influenced their purchasing decision of non-prescription medication which was the lowest level in the Asia Pacific region and well below the global average of 19 percent.

“The challenge for OTC manufacturers lies in encouraging consumers to switch brands in a category characterised by auto-pilot purchasing and shopper loyalty. Through our consumer research and work with OTC companies, Nielsen has found humor and strong lifestyle associations have proven successful,” advises Doric.

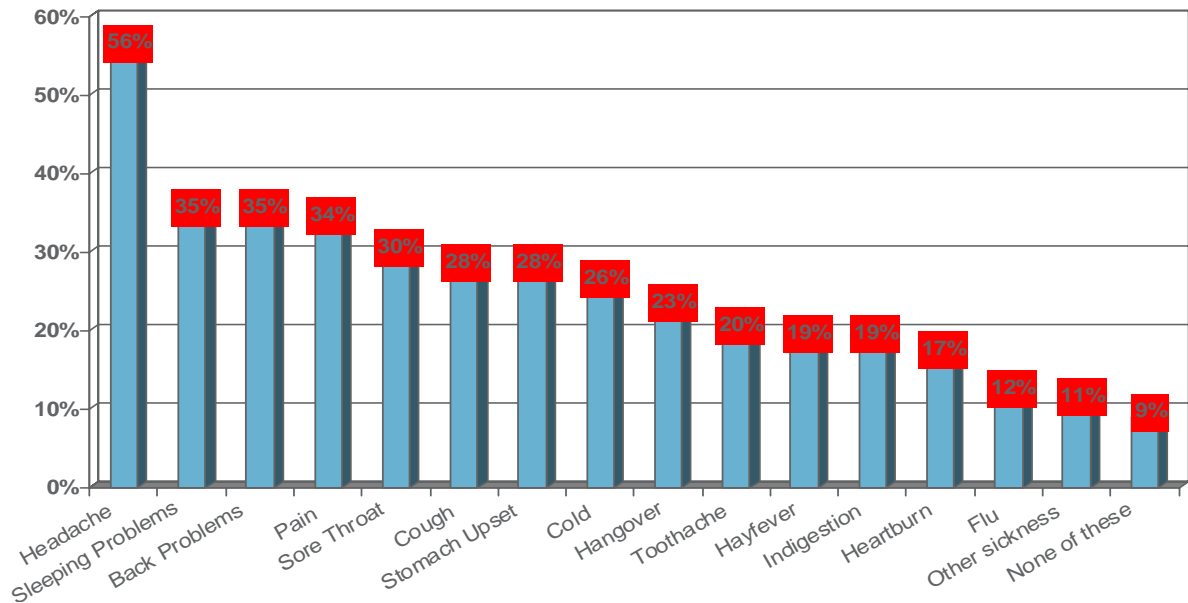
The global survey findings reflect some regional differences in the way consumers treat their ailments. In North America, consumers are more likely to seek out pharmacies than visit their doctor. In Europe and Asia, a visit to the doctor came ahead of reaching for non-prescription medication and home remedies, with Hong Kong leading the world with most people opting to see a doctor (51%) when they are ill. Meanwhile, people in Scandinavia and Asia Pacific are also more likely to ‘grin and bare it’ – about one third in Denmark (36%), Norway (33%) and Taiwan (28%) led the global rankings for taking ‘nothing at all’ to cure their health complaint.

The Nielsen survey also indicates that once a consumer wants to purchase a non-prescription medicine, experience with the product/brand always counts. Overwhelmingly, the most *loyal* consumers of OTC/self medication products are Asians – over 80 percent of Hong Kong, Singaporean and Chinese consumers say they always buy the same ‘tried and tested’ products. 68 percent of Americans also say they always buy the same brand of self-medication. The other factors that influenced what consumers did when they fell ill were reliance on medical professionals; and deeply rooted cultural ‘home remedies’ – especially in Central and Eastern European countries and throughout Asia.

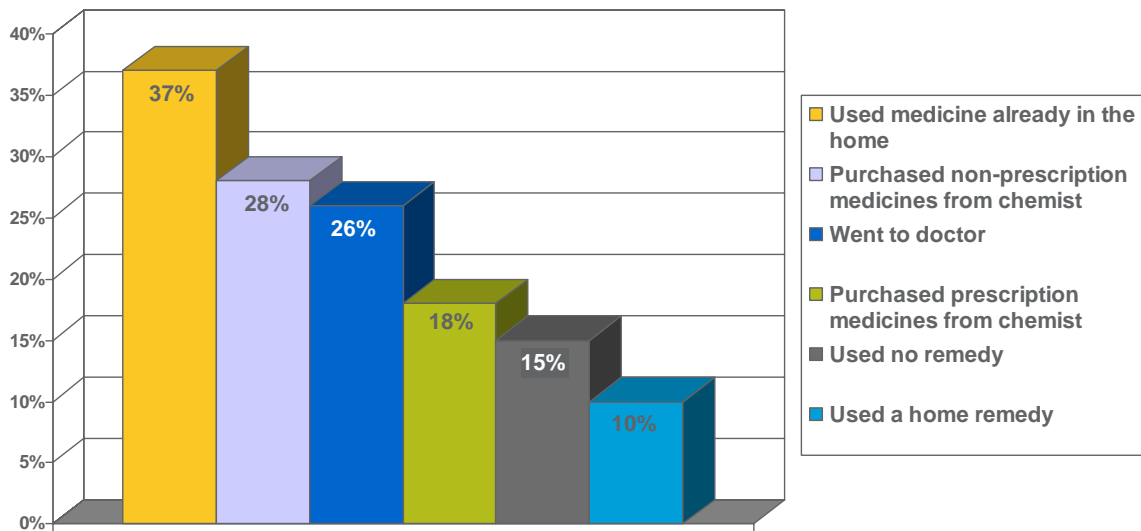
It’s worth-noting that while one in five global consumers (19%) said they were influenced by advertising or a friend’s recommendation when trying new OTC medications, people in Asia rely on OTC advertising more than any other region when making their decisions, led by

China, with 39 percent of Chinese consumers - the world's highest - saying their self-medication purchasing decisions are influenced by ads.

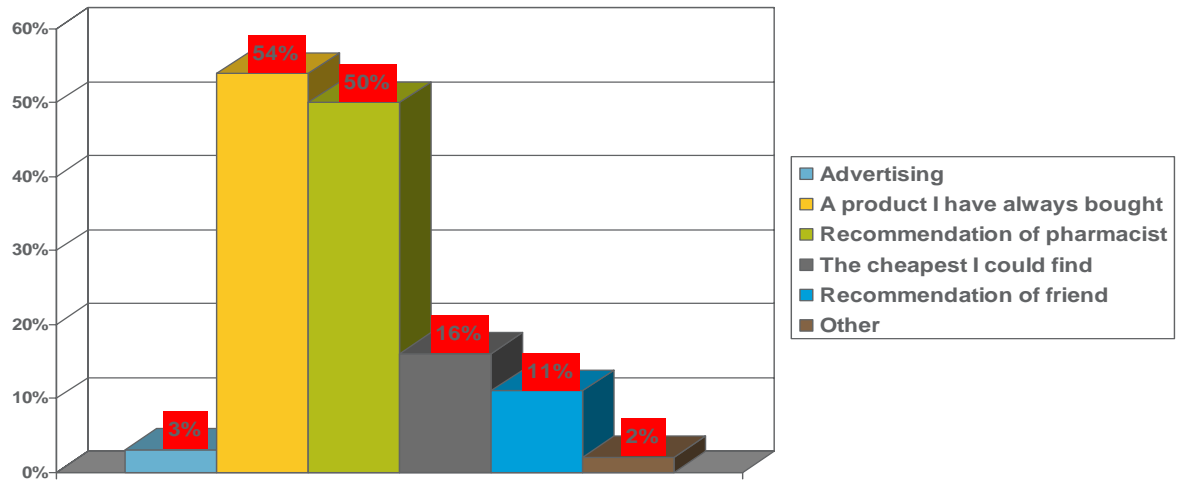
**Chart 1: Ailments suffered in the past month**



**Chart 2: Treatment of ailments**



**Chart 3: OTC purchasing drivers**



**About The Nielsen Company**

The Nielsen Company is a global information and media company with leading market positions and recognized brands in marketing information (ACNielsen), media information (Nielsen Media Research), business publications (Billboard, The Hollywood Reporter, Adweek), trade shows and the newspaper sector (Scarborough Research). The privately held company is active in more than 100 countries, with headquarters in Haarlem, the Netherlands, and New York, USA. For more information, please visit, [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com).

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