

Potential impact of U.S. demand on the Canadian supply of 46 prescription drugs.

Description

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DISCLAIMER: This study uses data from IQVIA Inc. The analysis, conclusions and opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the data supplier.

ABSTRACT

Canadian prices for patented medicines are regulated and are lower than American market prices on average, creating an incentive for Americans to import prescription drugs that were intended to be sold to Canadians. Importation on a commercial scale has not been allowed due to concerns of the U.S. FDA about the safety and effectiveness of products sold through foreign resale channels. Recent policy changes in the U.S. have introduced legal pathways allowing commercial scale importation of prescription drugs. This study estimates the impact that U.S. importation will have on the Canadian supply of a sample of medicines that are likely to be targets for purchase by American states, wholesalers and pharmacists. The purpose is to gauge the urgency of the threat that U.S. importation poses for the Canadian drug supply and to examine how this may affect specific patient populations differently. The analysis shows that the Canadian drug supply cannot sustain increased demand from full-scale U.S. importation. Most of the drugs studied would have their total Canadian supply exhausted in less than 3 months. Half the molecules would have been exhausted in just over 1 month and many would have lasted less than 2 weeks. The potentially rapid depletion of the Canadian drug supply from U.S. importation puts the onus on Canada's federal government to act pre-emptively to prevent events from moving faster than the legislative or regulatory process can respond.