

## Potent, unregulated steroid creams readily available in U.S.

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(HealthDay)—Potent prescription-strength topical corticosteroids

without a prescription (PSTCw/oP) are readily available in many U.S. cities, according to a letter to the editor published in the February issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

Rebecca S. Kimyon, from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and colleagues investigated the availability of PSTCw/oPs in the United States by posing as customers. The investigation included a convenience sample of 80 stores specializing in foreign imports in a convenience sample of 13 cities in nine U.S. states.

The researchers found that 45 percent of stores sold at least one PSTCw/oP, with 30 distinct PSTCw/oPs identified. The most common steroid preparations included clobetasol propionate 0.025 to 0.05 percent (eight), betamethasone dipropionate 0.05 to 0.12 percent (10), betamethasone valerate 0.02 to 0.1 percent (five), and fluocinonide 0.025 percent (five). The countries of manufacture for these products included Mexico, Switzerland, India, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Korea, Nigeria, China, and Italy. For high-potency [topical corticosteroids](#), the average cost was \$6.90/30 g for clobetasol propionate 0.05 percent and \$10.02/30 g for betamethasone dipropionate 0.05 percent, which is much lower than U.S. market prices of \$195.27/30 g and \$91.37/30 g, respectively (listed on GoodRx).

"These findings underscore the importance of asking about and physically examining patients' products," the authors write. "It is imperative to educate vulnerable patients on the potential harms associated with unmonitored prescription-strength topical corticosteroid use."

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)



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