



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain**

1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN

Tel: 020 7572 2335

Fax: 020 7572 2503

News release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 0.01 TUESDAY DECEMBER 15

THE SECRET DANGERS OF A FESTIVE FLING

As the Christmas party season reaches its peak, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is launching a campaign to warn of the dangers of getting chlamydia after a festive fling.

New research* released by the RPSGB reveals how the party atmosphere mixed with large quantities of alcohol are leading to serious sexual health hangovers. Experts predict that the number of chlamydia cases will soar this Christmas as statistics** on emergency contraception reveal that the number of people having unprotected sex peaks in December.

The Society's research highlights how 1 in 6 young people admitted to drinking three times more alcohol during a Christmas party compared to their consumption on a regular night out. With fewer inhibitions, 1 in 12 kissed a work colleague and an adventurous 1 in 5 said they go to their Christmas party with the intention of meeting a potential partner for the night.

The Society estimates that thousands of Brits could contract chlamydia this festive season. Although an increasing number of young people are being tested, it worries that only 15.9% of the highest risk age group (15-24 year olds) chose to have a test using the national programme last year. Although the under 25 age group most affected by chlamydia can get free testing from many pharmacies, less than half knew they could use this service.

RPSGB campaign spokesperon, community pharmacist Paul Johnson, says: "Community pharmacies are well equipped to deliver this service because they are easily accessible to young people and pharmacists are trusted healthcare professionals.

“Unfortunately chlamydia is one of the UK’s most common Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) and if left untreated it can cause infertility. Although young people have said they would use a pharmacy for screening, the free service is quite new and there are still many who are not aware it exists.”

Worryingly, 75% of women and 50% of men with chlamydia have no symptoms. People who develop symptoms may notice them 1-3 weeks after contact with chlamydia, or many months later, or not until the infection spreads. With 1 in 14 Brits currently suspected of unknowingly carrying chlamydia, a new advert is being launched today to raise awareness amongst season party goers of the potential dangers of drunken office flings. The RPSGB is also urging young people to visit a pharmacy to check they haven’t received this unwanted present for Christmas.

Ends

**For media enquiries please contact the
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's Public Relations Unit
020 7572 2476**

Notes to editors:

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is the professional body for pharmacists and the regulatory body for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in England, Scotland and Wales. The primary objectives of the Society are to lead, regulate, develop and represent the profession of pharmacy. Following the publication in 2007 of the Government White Paper *Trust, Assurance and Safety - The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century*, the Society is working towards the demerger of its regulatory and professional roles. This will see the establishment of a new General Pharmaceutical Council and a new professional body for pharmacy in 2010.

Pharmacists are on the frontline for advising on Chlamydia and sexual health. Community pharmacies are open at convenient times and many now offer free Chlamydia screening to

under 25's. To learn more about the Society or to view the campaign advert visit www.rpsgb.org on Tuesday December 15 and click on this press release.

For more information on the National Chlamydia Screening Programme visit <http://www.chlamydia-screening.nhs.uk/>

Statistics

*The research was conducted by OnePoll between 1- 4 December interviewing 2,000 young people aged 16-24. Other survey results showed 1 in 5 (20%) say they don't remember what happened the night of their work Christmas party, 8% said something inappropriate to their boss and 1 in 33 young people said they had unprotected sex with a work colleague after a Christmas party.

**Levonelle Emergency Contraception - October 04 – Aug 09