

## Survey results: highlights

### Research into children's medicines

#### Does the pharmaceutical industry conduct sufficient research into improving the quality of medicines for children?

Of the 83% of respondents who felt qualified to answer this question, 78% believed that the pharmaceutical industry “did not” or “did not always” conduct sufficient research into improving the quality of medicines in children. For instance, the respondent from [Deutsche Rheuma-Liga](#), a German arthritis patient organisation, said: “There is a serious lack of testing of medicinal products in the paediatric population—too much ‘off label’ or ‘unlicensed’ medicines in children”.

Participants noted some useful initiatives in the field of paediatric oncology and plasma derivatives, but also emphasised a considerable scope for improvement.

Various explanations emerged as to why pharmaceutical companies have fallen short in the field of children's medicines:

➤ **Pharma is inexperienced.** [Latvijas Kaulu Par Mums](#)/Latvian Rheumatic Organisation for Children and Youth

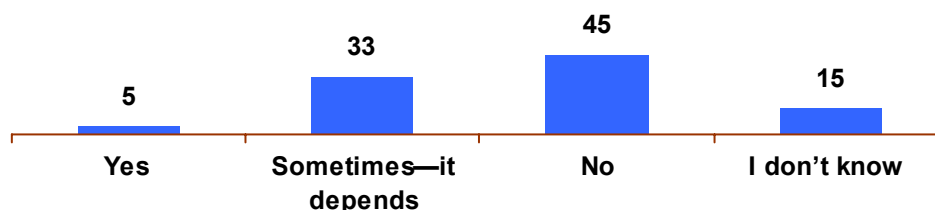
argued that pharmaceutical companies were “not so good in this area”.

➤ **Ethical barriers.** Tony Gavin, CEO of UK-based [Leukaemia CARE](#), indicated that inherent ethical problems may have stopped pharmaceutical companies from conducting research on children's medicines.

➤ **An unprofitable market.** Other groups declared that, until the arrival of regulatory intervention or some form of coercion, the pharmaceutical industry would never develop medicines exclusively for younger people, since the market for such products is too unprofitable. This point of view was also expressed in the report *Priority Medicines for Europe and the World*, published by the WHO in November 2004 [WHO/EDM/PAR/2004/7; written by Warren Kaplan and Richard Laing of the WHO's Department of Essential Drugs and Medicines Policy.] The WHO report noted that medicines differ widely according to the age, gender and genetic profiles of individual patients. The pharmaceutical industry, however, finds the cost of developing medicines for consumption by certain categories of population—especially children, older people, and pregnant and breast-feeding women—too prohibitive to be worthwhile. *Priority Medicines* therefore stressed the need for paediatric formulations, particularly in HIV/AIDS treatments [see ‘The future of medicines research: what health

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% of respondents, number = 75



Source: HSCNews International, March 2005