

Press Release

Date: 08 April 09

Time: 12.30

Subject: West Midlands businessman sentenced at Old Bailey for sale & supply of 'flabjab'

Contact: Press Office 020 7084 3651 press.office@mhra.gsi.gov.uk

Out of hours 07770 446 189

West Midlands businessman has over £800,000 confiscated at Old Bailey for illegal sale and supply of 'Flabjab'

Today at the Old Bailey a man from the West Midlands was ordered to pay over £800,000 under the Proceeds of Crime Act for the illegal advertising, sale and supply of an unlicensed medicine called Lipostabil. This is sometimes unlawfully advertised in the UK as cosmetic product for the reduction of fat.

Mr. Duncan Williams of Fermoy House, Barnt Green, Birmingham, B45 8JN was told by the Court that he had to pay the confiscation order within six months or face a four year jail term. He was also ordered to pay over £19,000 in court costs. Both he and his company were additionally fined a total £10,000.

In 2005 the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) carried out an investigation into Mr Williams' clinic (Lipomed) because it was illegally advertising, selling and administering Lipostabil and Ensential N (also known as 'Flabjab')

'Lipomed used a number of clinics throughout the country where customers were injected under the skin with Lipostabil making some customers experience severe side affects, such as swelling of the arms and neck. For each course of treatment Mr. Williams was charging customers £400. The company's records also showed that at least 1000 customers were treated with 'flabjab' over a ten month period in 2004.

In October 2005 MHRA officers visited three addresses in the West Midlands and seized £10,000 worth of Lipostabil and related documents.

Mr Williams pleaded guilty to the offences at City of London Magistrates on 04 December 2007.

Mick Deats MHRA Head of Enforcement said, “This case highlights the robust action the MHRA takes against those who illegally advertise, sell and administer unlicensed medicines for cosmetic purposes.

“Consumers should be aware that Lipostabil is unlicensed in the UK and the safety of this product for cosmetic use has not been established. It could cause serious short and long-term side effects to your health.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. Lipostabil is not licensed in the UK. Lipostabil is licensed as an intravenous medicine in Germany, its country of origin, for the prevention and treatment of blood vessel blockages by fat particles (fat embolism). It is not approved or licensed for cosmetic use. Product safety has not been established for subcutaneous use for cosmetic purposes. Consumers should be aware of this should they be offered the product.
2. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has received reports of potential adverse reactions to cosmetic treatment with Lipostabil®. Some patients may experience allergic reactions or sensitivity issues to the product. The usual route of administration for cosmetic surgery is subcutaneous (injection under the skin) and this is warned against in the manufacturer’s information sheet which specifically states that Lipostabil should not be given subcutaneously.
3. However, it may be imported into the UK by doctors for clinical use for the prevention and treatment of fat embolism subject to compliance with the Medicines for Human Use (Manufacturing, Wholesale Dealing and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/2789). This allows for importation from elsewhere in the EU by holders of Wholesale Dealers Licences, or from outside of the EU by holders of Wholesale Dealers Import Licences. When ordering, proof must be available from the doctor to demonstrate the existence of a special clinical need for the patient. The MHRA must be consulted about the import by the wholesaler using the notification procedure set out in SI 1999/4. The use of Lipostabil for cosmetic purposes does not constitute a special clinical need.
4. Lipostabil Q & A :
<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Safetyinformation/Safetywarningsalertsandrecalls/Safetywarningsandmessagesformedicines/CON2030349>
5. The MHRA is the government agency responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices work, and are acceptably safe. No product is risk-free. Underpinning all our work lie robust and fact-based judgments to ensure that the



benefits to patients and the public justify the risks. We keep watch over medicines and devices, and take any necessary action to protect the public promptly if there is a problem. We encourage everyone –the public and healthcare professionals as well as the industry – to tell us about any problems with a medicine or medical device, so that we can investigate and take any necessary action.
www.mhra.gov.uk