

Press release: West London crooks convicted of conspiracy to supply illicit meds

Dhonsi was sentenced to 38 months imprisonment, Mirza to 18 months imprisonment, and Ali to 9 months imprisonment for their roles in the crimes.

Following a complex investigation, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) seized more than 300,000 tablets, worth in excess of £315,000. It is believed these tablets seized represent a fraction of the overall illegal operation.

The trio were convicted of conspiracy to supply unauthorised medicines, including diazepam, zolpidem and zopiclone which are also controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act, together with other powerful prescription-only medicines.

The supply of medicines from sources outside the regulated supply chain represents a significant public health risk and the criminal group responsible showed a complete disregard for the public's safety and well-being.

The medicines the group were supplying can have serious side effects; for example, finasteride, which is used to treat hair loss, can lead to foetal abnormalities and sibutramine, which is used as an appetite suppressant was banned in 2010 because of the health risks associated with its use which include cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke.

Alastair Jeffrey, MHRA Head of Enforcement said:

Medicines purchased outside the regulated supply chain cannot be guaranteed to meet standards of quality, safety and effectiveness and can present a real risk to public health. Some may contain dangerous ingredients which can have devastating consequences for patients who use them.

We work to identify those involved in illegal activities with medicines and will use our powers to investigate fully, confiscate assets and, where necessary, prosecute those putting profit before public health.

Criminals selling medicines illegally have a flagrant disregard for your health, and only care about making money. Contact a GP or a healthcare professional if you have any concerns about your health.

Visit <http://www.gov.uk/fakemeds> for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.