The British Ignore Coughs and Colds

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GfK consumer survey on health in EuropeAlmost 70% of the British do nothing when suffering from an ordinary cold â€“ the highest percentage of the European countries studied. Very little use is made of home remedies, which are so popular in other countries, and the main recourse is to prescription free OTC products from a pharmacy. The â€œEuropean Consumer Study 2007â€•, conducted by GfK Association, also shows that, across all the countries surveyed, women are distinctly more proactive than men when it comes to treatment. The extensive study, which surveyed around 10,200 private consumers aged 14+ on how they deal with illness and medication, particularly colds. The survey, which is representative of around 426 million people, was carried out in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain and the UK. The findings reveal some pan-European trends, as well as marked differences in attitude between the various nationalities. Treating a cold (multiple responses, findings expressed in percent) Â I take a home remedyI buy a prescription-free OTC product from a pharmacy I see my doctorI do nothingI stay at homeI consult a homeo-path or naturo-pathNo. of treatments indicatedTotal 9 countries39.636.821.819.815.91.21.4UK15.332.75.069.614.90.61.4Germany49.745.830.89.721.91.51.6France24.438.62 4.226.014.22.31.3Spain20.829.144.111.813.71.71.2Austria53.838.235.110.222.82.71.6Poland45.941.327.60.215.70.71.3 Italy17.243.79.226.210.71.91.1Netherlands18.526.24.249.47.30.81.1Russia66.031.620.54.517.10.51.4Source: European Consumer Study 2007 / GfK AssociationÂ Home remedies are the first choice for most of EuropeMost Europeans do not instantly turn to the chemical solution. Whether they choose herbal teas, steam baths or poultices, the tried and tested home remedy is the most frequently used way to treat an ordinary cold. Just under 40% of the respondents said that they treated sore throats, loss of voice, colds and even a temperature themselves, often self-medicating with a freely available product like a nose spray, a juice extract or suppositories bought over-the-counter from a pharmacy. In a European comparison, the Germans are in the lead when it comes to buying non-prescription products when they have a cold. Virtually half of German women choose this method of treatment, with German men only slightly under at 43%. However, at just under 50%, Germans of both sexes still prefer tried and tested home remedies. In Russia and Austria, the trend is even more distinct, with two out of three Russians and around 54% of Austrians preferring to drink herbal teas or taking a steam bath and only 32% of Russians and 38% of Austrians going to the pharmacy. The situation is reversed in Italy, where around 44% buy a non-prescription product available over the counter and only 17% of those surveyed treat themselves with a home remedy as a rule. Across the countries, the findings show that women are more proactive than men when it comes to treating a cold. Around 43% of women, compared with 36% of men, use home remedies. For OTC treatments, the women dominate with a ratio of 39% to 34%. The contrast is particularly strong in Austria, where 45% of women and only 31% of men go to the pharmacy to buy a product. Austrian men also use home remedies more rarely than their female counterparts. The British and Dutch ignore coldsIn the UK and the Netherlands over half of respondents said they generally ignored a cold and did nothing. Only around 4% of Dutch and 5% of Brits consulted their doctors and, in both these countries, the recourse to freely available non-prescription products, especially home remedies, was markedly less popular. For French and Italians, a quarter sees no reason to take any remedial action for a simple cold. The Spanish and Austrians see their doctors most frequentlyÂ Â At 44%, beating a direct path to the doctor is the by far the most preferred method of treating a cold in Spain. This percentage is double that of the European average of around 22%. In Austria, 37.5% of men, as opposed to 33% of women, consult their doctors. However, three out of ten Germans, both men and women, also consult a doctor. Compared to earlier surveys carried out in the mid 90s, the current survey shows that distinctly fewer Germans visit their doctors for an ordinary cold today than before. Germans and Austrians with a cold tend to stay at homeStaying at home, looking after themselves or even remaining in bed is an option for only a minority of around 16% of Europeans surveyed. Only the Austrians and Germans showed an above average tendency to look after themselves, with 27% of Austrian men staying at home even more often than their womenfolk (19%). In Germany, by their own admission, one in five Germans surveyed opted to give themselves a rest at home and even here, at 22%, the proportion of men choosing to do this is slightly above that of German women, 21.6% of whom chose to stay home. However, the trend is in decline and compared with earlier surveys conducted in the mid-90s, German men and women are not staying at home quite as often as they used to when they have a cold or lose their voices.Â Â Consulting a homeopath or naturopath for a cold is generally of minor significance, with just three percent of Austrians and French women opting for this type of alternative treatment. Further information:
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