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2.5% of U.S. adults buy drugs abroad

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Drugs from other countries such as Canada and Mexico have been purchased by 5.4 million Americans, about 2.5 percent of the adult population, according to a survey by an industry trade group.

More than half of those who bought drugs from abroad listed the lack of a doctor's prescription among the important reasons, said the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. Brand-name drugs cost as much as 70 percent less abroad than in the U.S., partly because of government price controls in other countries.

The survey of more than 14,000 Americans, conducted in January, found that 45 percent of those who imported drugs bought them in person at a pharmacy in another country, 42 percent got them through storefront operations in the U.S. and 31 percent ordered them online.

One in five Americans importing drugs earn more than \$100,000 annually, and purchasers are more likely than the general population to be younger than age 35.