## SUBSCRIBE NOV

to Prescrire International

Subscription rates	1 year	2 years
Individual rate (1)	€130	€240
Student rate (1)	€60	€112
Institutional rate (1)(2)	€325	€630

<sup>1-</sup> For Solidarity subscription rates see the preceding page.

Yes, I would like to subscribe to Prescrire International		
Please send me a free sample issue of the French journal <i>Prescrire</i>		
Title: Mr Ms		
Last Name:		
First Name:		
Address (1):		
Postal code: City:		
Country:		
Tel:		
Fax:		
E-Mail (must be provided):		
Occupation:		
working in the community, hospital, university, industry other (please circle)		
1- Give the format of the address as it is used in your country.		
I enclose a cheque for €		
☐ I pay €by Credit card		
<ul><li>VISA</li><li>■ EUROCARD/MASTERCARD</li><li>■ AMERICAN EXPRESS</li></ul>		
Card number: Lilian Expiry date: Lilian Expiry date:		
Signature:		

Postage and handling charges are included in the quoted prices. Subscribers outside the European Union who are subject to value added tax (VAT) may pay the ex-tax cost: divide the full cost by 1.021. EU subscribers subject to VAT must provide us with their VAT code number.

## Send your order with payment to:

**Prescrire International** 83 bd Voltaire - 75558 PARIS CEDEX 11 -**FRANCE** 

Fax: + 33 1 49237648 e-mail: international@prescrire.org website: english.prescrire.org

## The Mediator<sup>o</sup> scandal in France: key dates, key issues

The scandal hit the headlines in October 2010, when French daily Le Figaro published the results of an official study estimating between 500 and 1000 deaths due to Mediator°, which causes pulmonary adverse effects and heart valve damage. In June 2010, a book by pneumologist Irène Frachon had begun to reveal the extent of the damage caused by the drug, despite a lawsuit by Servier that forced the subtitle "How many deaths?" to be censored.

Mediator<sup>o</sup> (benfluorex) is an appetite suppressant of the amphetamine family. It went on sale in France in 1976. Officially marketed for use in diabetes and hypertriglyceridaemia, the drug was also widely prescribed as an appetite suppressant.

In a 1997 review, Prescrire pointed to the poor level of evidence and the dubious harm-benefit balance for benfluorex. Prescrire continued to caution against the use of the drug, including texts published in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2009.

Spain withdrew the marketing authorisation for benfluorex in 2003.

France did not withdraw benfluorex from sale until November 2009.

The European Commission ruled in June 2010 that no pharmaceutical products containing benfluorex could be sold in the countries of the European Union.

In 2011, in the wake of the grave regulatory deficiencies revealed by the Mediator° scandal, several official audits and a national medicines conference "Les Assises du Médicament" were set in motion. In August 2011 a draft law on medicines was published by the health ministry, and the French parliament is expected to act on it by the end of the year.

Prescrire has played an important role in these events, but declines to act in any kind of "official" capacity. Prescrire will maintain its wholly independent evaluation of medicines' harm-benefit balances, and continue to monitor decisions by agencies and political authorities, into 2012 and beyond.

**©Prescrire** 

Further details are online at english.prescrire.org:

pownloaded from english prescrire org on 12/07/2025

Copyright(c)Prescrire. For personal use only.

<sup>2-</sup> Commercial companies and institutions