

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

1- For Solidarity subscription rates see the preceding page.  
2- Commercial companies and institutions.

- Yes, I would like to subscribe to *Prescrire International***
- Please send me a free sample issue of the French journal *Prescrire***

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

VISA

EUROCARD/MASTERCARD

AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card number:

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.

## The Mediator° 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° (*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

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](mailto:international@prescrire.org)**

**website: [english.prescrire.org](http://english.prescrire.org)**

Further details are online at **[english.prescrire.org](http://english.prescrire.org)** :

search with keyword "*benfluorex*"