

# Glaxo settles Paxil lawsuit in the US

**By David Litterick in New York**

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Drug giant GlaxoSmithKline has agreed to pay \$64m (£34m) to settle a lawsuit accusing it of promoting its antidepressant Paxil for use by children and teenagers while withholding negative information about the drug's safety and effectiveness.

Though considered a safe treatment for adults, the US Food and Drug Administration has issued warnings against Paxil for children after some studies found the drug increased suicidal tendencies while having questionable effects on depression.

If the settlement gets final approval, US residents who bought Paxil for a minor will be eligible for compensation, once approximately \$16.6m of lawyers' fees have been deducted. Money will also be taken out of the settlement fund to pay for a national advertising campaign to publicise the agreement.

Glaxo denies it was in the wrong. "We believe we acted appropriately," said Glaxo spokesman Mary Ann Rhyne. "We deny liability. We have taken this action to avoid protracted litigation and the costs associated with that. We haven't admitted any liability."

The suit was filed in July 2004, just weeks after the state of New York sued Glaxo. It alleged that the company touted one clinical study that showed mixed results on Paxil's use in children, while suppressing four other studies that questioned the drug's efficacy and noted an increase in suicidal thinking and behaviour.

The amount of money plaintiffs will receive depends on how many people make a claim.