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Paul's Summary (transcribed)

Medicine that people can purchase without a prescription from a doctor is called **over-the-counter drugs**. Currently over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, such as Aspirin, are only available among the 20,000 **pharmacies** nationwide. Even though pharmacies are numerous, they close their doors relatively early, and do not open on Sundays and public holidays. This can **cause inconvenience** to consumers, especially those who are looking to **ease their physical discomfort quickly**. Unfortunately it seems that many still won't get relief anytime soon.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare has decided to continue the ban of selling OTC drugs in supermarkets and 24-HR convenience stores. This is **creating a monopoly for pharmacies** as they have exclusive rights to sell these essential drugs to the public. The Ministry has received a serious **backlash** to the decision from various consumer rights groups and Korea's largest interest group of doctors. Doctors have maintained that OTC medicine to treat minor symptoms of illnesses should be freely available to the public. In many other countries, **cold medicine, digestive pills, mild painkillers**, and allergy medicine are sold at local stores without a pharmacist present.

The Korean Pharmaceutical Association (KPA) disagrees, saying that the sale of OTC drugs is limited for a reason. Many of the drugs that would be sold under the revised regulation require **proper directions** and monitoring from pharmacists. Financially, OTC drugs take up more than 10 percent of sales at pharmacies. The loss of the exclusive sales rights would **deal a significant blow to** pharmacists nationwide.

It is difficult to judge whether the current OTC drug regulations are merely **in favor of the interests of pharmacists** or for the sake of public safety. Furthermore it is odd to see doctors and pharmacists **on opposite sides of the table** as they both **protect the health of the general public**. Nonetheless, consumers will still be aching for a more convenient solution to their late-night upset stomachs.

Key Words

1. 처방전 없이 사는 약 over the counter drugs, OTC drugs
2. 처방이 있어야 사는 약 prescription drugs
3. 일반 의약품 over the counter drugs, OTC drugs
4. 약국 pharmacy, drugstore
5. 감기약 cold medicine
6. 두통약 painkiller
7. 소화제 digestive pills, pepto bismol,
8. 소비자 편의 consumer convenience
9. 약 복용의 안전성 consumer safety
10. 약을 잘 복용하기 take your medicine properly, use proper instructions to take your medicine
11. 의약품 재분류 reclassifying medicine
12. 이해당사자의 밥그릇싸움 a fight between special interest groups, a question of who's going to take the bigger slice (piece) of the pie

More Key Words

1. 변비약 laxative
2. 속 쓰릴 때 먹는 약, 제산제 antacid
3. 변비가 있다 be constipated
4. 논거가 부족하다 argument is invalid, argument is superficial