151043 - Doctor working in a pharmacy: can he prescribe medicine for people who are sick?

the question

I am a doctor but I have found a job selling medicine in a pharmacy. People usually consult the person working in the pharmacy when they have minor symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, diarrhoea and colds, then they buy the medicine. In cases that are more serious, they advise the patient to consult a doctor at the hospital or private clinic.

1- What is the ruling on my doing that when I am a doctor? Will I be liable if the medicine causes harm to the patient? Even if I refuse to give advice, people will go and consult someone who is not specialised, in some other pharmacy, so that they can buy the medicine.
2- What is meant exactly when it is said that someone is liable?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There is nothing wrong with you telling a patient about medicine that is appropriate for him, so long as you adhere to the following guidelines:

1-It should be based on knowledge of the medicine and how suitable it is for the patient.

2-That should have to do with minor, ordinary matters such as headaches, colds and so on, that do not require any examinations or tests.

3-That should not be done with the aim of promoting sales of a particular medicine when there are other medicines that are more beneficial for the patient in terms of efficacy or cost.

If these guidelines are followed, this action comes under the heading of being kind to people and sparing them the cost of medical consultation.

With regard to the doctor’s liability, the basic principle concerning that is the hadeeth narrated by ‘Amr ibn Shu‘ayb, from his father, from his grandfather who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever practices medicine although he is not known for that will be held liable.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 4586; an-Nasaa’i, 4830; Ibn Maajah, 3466. There are some reservations about its isnaad, but it was classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Sunan Abi Dawood.

We ask Allah to help and guide us and you.

And Allah knows best.