

Researchers develop drug interface to save lives

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A drug information interface system developed by two University of Alberta researchers has been shown to help in dealing with visual and motor impairments, which can make sorting, holding and indentifying pills a challenge as we age.

Lisa Given and Stan Ruecker, professors in humanities computing, asked seniors, age 65 and older, to imagine having accidentally dropped and mixed up their [pills](#). Using a sample of about a half-dozen drugs, researchers say the seniors were able to identify and re-organize the pills when asked to use the interface, which had images and details of more than a thousand pills in its database.

The interface, which researchers hope to adapt for install on portable computing devices such as a Blackberry, could also be used in poison control centres where officials have little time to save a person's life and must act quickly to determine the amount and kind of pills ingested. Researchers say the system will help poison control to identify drugs efficiently and reliably.

Given and Ruecker also say the system could be used in emergency rooms in the case of someone who had overdosed on a combination of drugs. Given says in such situations all the medical staff might have is a plastic bag full of pills with no knowledge about the drugs. The researchers say medical practitioners could quickly use the interface to identify the pills and their characteristics.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

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