

Efforts to develop new drugs that hopefully will never be used

June 27 2012

Concerns about terrorist attacks, the prospect of a rogue nation using nuclear weapons and the Fukushima power plant accident in Japan are fostering efforts to develop a new family of drugs that everyone hopes will never be used, according to an article in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

Ann M. Thayer, C&EN senior correspondent, explains that the federal government has launched programs to develop medical countermeasures against nuclear threats. Radiation releases can happen under various circumstances, including failure of safety systems at commercial nuclear power plants and [terrorist attacks](#). The article describes programs run by the U.S. Food & [Drug](#) Administration (FDA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health that support several small companies as they try to develop drugs to treat acute radiation syndrome (ARS).

The article discusses the companies' approaches. Some seek to adapt existing drugs, including treatments for the side effects of radiation therapy for cancer. Thayer notes that because these drugs are already approved by the FDA, stockpiling them would be easier. Others are looking for new compounds that can treat the symptoms of ARS or remove radioactive particles from the body.

More information: "The Drugs That May Never Be Used", cen.acs.org/articles/90/i26/Drugs-Never-Used.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

Citation: Efforts to develop new drugs that hopefully will never be used (2012, June 27) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-06-efforts-drugs.html>

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