

Most prescription drugs manufactured overseas—**are they safe?**

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Most pharmaceutical drugs in Canada are manufactured overseas in countries such as India, China and others, yet how can we be confident the drug supply is safe, writes a drug policy researcher in an opinion piece in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Alarmed by alerts about potentially harmful products such as nonprescription erectile dysfunction drugs with names like Uprizing 2.0 and Ying Da Wang—most from overseas—Alan Cassels began to think about [pharmaceutical drugs](#) sold in Canada. Are they safe? Who regulates them?

"Most Canadians probably don't know that many of our pharmaceuticals come from places like India and China," writes Cassels. "How often do our regulators dust off their passports and fly to China or India to ensure that the plants producing pharmaceuticals are clean, follow proper manufacturing techniques and contain what is on the label (and nothing else)?"

He was unable to find out much from Health Canada because information about inspections is not public.

"This situation doesn't leave me with the warm fuzzies," he writes. "Especially when we're dealing with—how can I say this nicely—a federal agency that refuses to even enforce the laws against illegal [drug advertising](#) on a bus shelter at the end of my street?"

More information: www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.120416

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