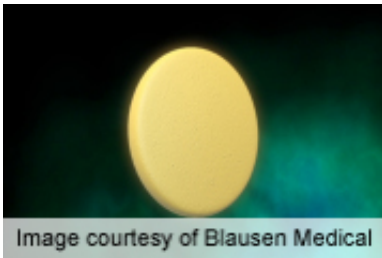


IOM urges international action to eradicate fake drugs

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(HealthDay)—Falsified and substandard medications pose public health problems around the world, and international action should be taken to combat the phenomenon, according to a report published Feb. 13 by the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

Noting that considerable working capital is required to assure the manufacture of quality medicines, Lawrence O. Gostin, J.D., from the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C., and colleagues from the IOM reviewed the global [public health](#) implications of falsified medicines and recommended measures to eradicate the problem.

According to the authors, to improve the quality of medicine and protect consumers, the [drug](#) distribution system should be strengthened.

Restriction of the U.S. wholesale market to firms approved by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy would tighten the American drug distribution chain and encourage better control of drug wholesalers. In low- and middle-income countries, the governments should establish an appealing environment to encourage reputable private drug sellers. Falsified and substandard medicines often are ineffective, promote [drug resistance](#), and may cause illness and death, and consequently represent a serious public health concern. Eradicating these drugs will require national regulation and international cooperation. A voluntary international agreement could go some way to achieving this aim.

"Stakeholders around the world share a common interest in combating inferior-quality drugs. At the international level, productive discussion relies on cooperation and mutual trust," the authors write. "The report advocates for an emerging consensus on once-contentious terms and lays out a plan to invest in quality to improve public health."

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