

Interpol deal with drug firms to fight fake medicines

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Interpol on Tuesday announced a deal with the world's top pharmaceutical companies to fight fake drugs which threaten the health of millions, especially in poor countries.

Twenty-nine leading companies have pledged 4.5 million euros (\$5.9 million) over three years to improve the fight against the counterfeit industry, boost public awareness and crack down on illegal manufacturers.

"With no country, no drug, no medical product immune from counterfeiting, a global effort is needed to combat this threat which puts the lives of millions of people at risk every single day," said Interpol Secretary General Ronald K. Noble.

Others highlighted the potentially deadly hazards of fake medicines.

"In the case of drug counterfeiting, it can mean the difference between life and death for a patient," said Christopher Viehbacher, the head of French drug firm Sanofi.

"It is estimated that 10 percent of medicines are fake and these figures can go up to 50 percent, particularly in some poorer countries."

According to the [World Health Organisation](#) more than 50 percent of medicines bought online have been found to be fake.

Counterfeit [cough syrup](#) and other medicines laced with diethylene glycol have caused eight mass [poisonings](#) around the world including in 2006 in Panama where more than 100 people died, many of them children, an Interpol statement said.

In 2012, some 109 [heart patients](#) in Pakistan died after taking fake medicine, it added.

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