

Tagging drugs to fight counterfeit medicines

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The U.S. and other countries are enacting rules to clamp down on the sales of fake pharmaceuticals, which pose a public health threat. But figuring out a system to track and authenticate legitimate drugs still faces significant obstacles, according to an article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Citing a report by the U.S. Center for Medicine in the Public Interest, C&EN Contributing Editor Leonora Walet notes that makers of counterfeit medicines raked in \$75 billion in 2010. The global market for fighting these fakes has grown to \$1 billion in response.

Biotechnology companies continue to work on improved methods to stamp out pharmaceutical imposters and are turning to microtags. These are tiny specks made of various materials, including silicon dioxide or even DNA, that encode information specific to a product batch.

While tagging technologies could become a powerful tool in fighting [counterfeit drugs](#), developers still have to overcome major challenges. They have to find a way to incorporate tags in pharmaceuticals without compromising safety or effectiveness. Doing so could cost millions more.

More information: This story is available at: cenm.ag/fakedrugs

Provided by American Chemical Society

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