

# A growing public health threat

## FALSIFIED MEDICINES KNOW NO BORDER

**Falsified medicines are a growing public health threat for every country, every medicine, and every person.**

The Pharmaceutical Security Institute (PSI) documented a 34% increase in "counterfeit incidents" between 2014 and 2015. Though certain regions and countries, such as Asia, Latin America and China, are the most common sources of counterfeit incidents, falsified medicines are a threat for all countries. Once falsified medicines enter the supply chain, they endanger lives across the globe, including in high-income countries, and this international threat is magnified by the growing online market for falsified medicines.

Every medicine is affected by falsification, including life-saving medicines. Whether a medicine is brand-name, generic, prescription, or over-the-counter, it is at risk for falsification. And while counterfeiters often target lifestyle drugs, life-saving medicines are the fastest growing category of falsified medicines. A study published in *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* found that 52.8% of all counterfeit medicines detected in the legitimate supply chain are life-saving-related treatments<sup>5</sup>.

**EVERY THERAPEUTIC  
CATEGORY IS  
AFFECTED**

52.8%

of all counterfeit medicines detected in the legitimate supply chain are lifesaving-related treatments:



21.1%

Anti-infective\*



11.6%

Cardiovascular



11.0%

Central nervous system



9.1%

Alimentary

\*including both branded and generic anti-infectives/antibiotics, such as anti-malarial

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## A GLOBAL RESPONSE TO A LIFE-THREATENING CHALLENGE

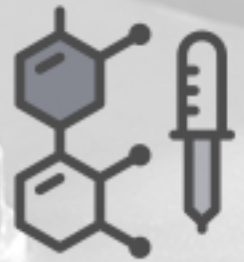
**Falsified medicines threaten patients' lives.** An analysis of falsified medicines has found samples that contained no active pharmaceutical ingredient (API), or even worse, contained the wrong API, the wrong dosage, or other dangerous substances. No quality falsified medicines exist.

As a result, patients around the world face a life-threatening risk from falsified medicines, whether because they fail to receive the treatment they need or because a falsified medicine actively harms them. Falsified medicines can cause further illness, disability, resistance to authentic medicines, and even death. Further, falsified medicines undermine patients' trust in health systems, government agencies, health care providers and manufacturers of genuine medicines.

**Every country and stakeholder must respond to the widespread impacts of falsified medicines.** Halting this global health threat demands an integrated multi-stakeholder approach. This must include strong national regulatory frameworks, as well as effective legislation, robust awareness efforts, and the prevention, control, detection, and monitoring of falsified medicines.

### PILLS THAT DO NOT ACTUALLY CONTAIN WHAT WE THINK THEY DO

- ✗ no active ingredient
- ✗ wrong ingredient
- ✗ wrong dose
- ✗ dangerous substances



...and that are **concocted in unsanitary and unregulated conditions**, like in garages, warehouses or shacks.