

Plant DNA 'tags' might put an end to counterfeit drugs

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In the U.S. it's uncommon to encounter counterfeit pharmaceuticals, drugs that are manufactured illegally and passed off as the genuine articles. But in countries with weaker regulatory systems such as [India and Nigeria](#) these drugs make up [25](#) to 70 percent of the pharmaceuticals available to consumers. In 2010 counterfeit drugs made up a [\\$75-billion industry](#), one that only seems to be growing. Because the majority of these drugs—intended to treat patients—contain too much or too little of the active ingredient, anywhere from 100,000 to one million people die every year worldwide.

Pharmaceutical companies and government regulators are continually looking for ways to mark genuine drugs and detect phonies. Now a biotech company called Applied DNA Sciences may have an original solution: tagging legitimate drugs with engineered DNA. Each unit of pharmaceutical would contain a unique genetic signature that authorities could detect with basic chemical assessments. The tactic has worked in other industries with complex supply chains such as textiles, and the DNA could be incorporated into the drugs while falling within the strict U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations for how the DNA is safely incorporated. Now all that remains is for pharmaceutical companies to put the solution into action.

Read full, original post: [Authentic Drugs Tagged with Plant DNA Could Help Snare Fake Meds](#)