

## Falsified medicinal products

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### Falsified medicinal products - general information

The business of medicine falsification or illegal trade in falsified medicinal products is a worldwide problem concerning both highly developed and developing countries. The scale of this phenomenon is growing and poses a risk to the safety and health of patients.

According to data of the World Health Organisation, as much as 1% of medicines in developed countries may be falsified. Moreover, it is estimated that falsified medicine available online constitute about 50% of offered products. Globally speaking, the number of falsified drugs may constitute about 10% of the global medicine market, while in some developing countries it may reach 30% of medicine available on the market. Experience of the World Health Organisation and other organisations fighting the illegal trade in medicine shows that the phenomenon of medicine falsification is escalating year by year.

The problem of falsified medicines in legal trade does not refer to Poland yet. So far, tests results of medicine samples taken from pharmacies, wholesale stores, manufacturers and importers shown no presence of falsified medicines in those places.

### Falsified medicinal products and illegal trade in it - a real threat.

Falsified pharmaceuticals do not meet the quality requirements applicable to particular medicinal products, contain worse-quality ingredients which may be mixed in wrong proportions, are contaminated or contain other non-authorized active pharmaceutical ingredients in relation to which it is unknown whether they are safe to use; these are substances that pose a health or life threat. Very often their composition is completely different from the composition declared on the package.

Another problematic issue is distribution of medicinal products in unauthorized places where medicine being sold illegally loses its original quality as it is transported and stored in improper conditions. These products most frequently include prescription medicines which administered on one's own may pose a serious and real threat to patients' health and life.

**EVEN SINGLE USE OF A FALSIFIED MEDICINAL PRODUCT MAY  
RESULT IN HEALTH LOSS OR DEATH.**

## What medicine is most frequently falsified?

Falsification may refer to all kinds of medicine – both original and generic ones. Currently, medicines that are most frequently falsified are products supporting the weight loss process, treating erectile dysfunction and steroid hormones. However, medicines from other therapeutic groups are becoming more popular in terms of falsification, e.g. contraceptives or psychotropic drugs. The tendency in highly developed countries is to falsify specialised and expensive medicine.