



Fight the Fakes Alliance calls for a watertight global medicines supply chain

- Fight the Fakes Alliance urges the international community to act now to prevent falsified and substandard medicines from reaching patients at risk via the global medicines supply chain.
- The 5th annual Fight the Fakes Week will take place under the slogan “Keeping patients safe by securing the global medicines supply chain” from 5 to 11 December 2022. It comes after a series of tragic deaths caused by substandard medicines.
- The Fight the Fakes Alliance welcomes new members to strengthen the Alliance and its fight against falsified and substandard medicines.

Geneva, 5 December 2022 – ‘Keep patients safe - Secure the global medicines supply chain’ is the motto of the 5th *Fight the Fakes Week*. The aim is to highlight how supply chain vulnerabilities are incentivising unscrupulous players to manufacture and distribute falsified and substandard medicines and facilitate their entry into the legitimate pharmaceutical supply chain.

Global healthcare supply chain actors, regulators, and the international community must urgently strengthen their collaboration to prevent substandard and fake medicines from reaching patients.

Recently, news that some 70 children in The Gambia may have died from substandard cough syrups made in India shocked the world¹. The World Health Organization (WHO) issued soon after a second alert² on additional toxic pediatric medicines identified in its South-East Asia region. According to Indonesian authorities, around 200 cases of acute kidney injuries in children have been reported, with almost 100 subsequent deaths³. Sadly, this is not the first time such reports have come to light⁴.

Falsified and substandard medicines can find their way into the supply chain in several ways: through mislabeling, human negligence, or intentional adulteration by manufacturers or suppliers to achieve higher profits. Moreover, crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and disruptions

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/63199691> and [https://www.who.int/news/item/05-10-2022-medical-product-alert-n-6-2022-substandard-\(contaminated\)-paediatric-medicines](https://www.who.int/news/item/05-10-2022-medical-product-alert-n-6-2022-substandard-(contaminated)-paediatric-medicines)

² [https://www.who.int/news/item/02-11-2022-medical-product-alert-n-7-2022-substandard-\(contaminated\)-paediatric-liquid-dosage-medicines](https://www.who.int/news/item/02-11-2022-medical-product-alert-n-7-2022-substandard-(contaminated)-paediatric-liquid-dosage-medicines)

³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63324653>

⁴ <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/india-cough-medicine-deaths/>



due to armed conflicts or natural disasters weaken the supply chain and exacerbate the issue, falsified and substandard medicines can be profitably used to fill the supply gap⁵.

These “medicines” pose serious risks to people’s health and have dire consequences for the wellbeing of communities and individual countries' socio-economic stability⁶. Stronger national regulatory frameworks, solid reporting mechanisms, extended medicine quality verification systems, and a secure global supply chain combined with effective awareness campaigns are crucial in the fight against substandard and falsified medicines.

In this context Fight the Fakes Alliance welcomes two new members that have zero tolerance for falsified and substandard medicines and commit to combining efforts in the fight against them.

“Promoting uniform and effective regulatory controls to prevent the production and trade in falsified and sub-standard versions of all medicines and their active pharmaceutical ingredients is central to the International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (IGBA) mission of supporting increased access to quality assured medicines for patients around the globe. IGBA is delighted to partner with all the members to tackle substandard and falsified products and hence strengthen the Fight the Fake Alliance.” said Vivian Frittelli, Chair of IGBA.

University of Hertfordshire Hosted by Global Academic Foundation (UH-GAF) academics and students are eager to join in helping to eradicate the substandard and falsified medicines which threaten patients’ lives as well as healthcare systems. *“We will start by establishing a school club that would work on arranging workshops, scientific activities, awareness campaigns, and seminars to support Fight the Fakes Alliance in achieving their respectful association objectives that work for the benefit, safety and security of the whole globe.”* Said Aly Ahmed Abdelbary, Dean of Life and Medical Sciences, UH-GAF.

Adam Aspinall, Fight the Fakes Alliance Chair and Senior Director, Access and Product Management at Medicines for Malaria Venture, in welcoming the new members, said: “Falsified and substandard medicines require action from all the stakeholders on the medicines supply chain, because it’s such a complex and multifaceted issue. The International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association is an important actor here and we are proud to have them on board. And we must not forget about how important education is, especially for youth, Fight the Fakes Alliance has a special place for Academic and Youth Chapters such as University of Hertfordshire Hosted by Global Academic Foundation.”

Fight the Fakes Week continues until 11 December 2022. The highlight is the flagship event on 7 December: “Keeping patients safe by securing the medicines supply chain” which convenes Fight the Fakes Alliance members and friends, representatives from pharmacopeias, regulators,

⁵ https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/COVID-19_research_brief_trafficking_medical_products.pdf and <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41572-022-00387-1>

⁶ <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/28-11-2017-1-in-10-medical-products-in-developing-countries-is-substandard-or-falsified> and <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/substandard-and-falsified-medical-products>



and industry representatives, to discuss actions that governments and global stakeholders can take to close quality gaps for pharmaceutical ingredients and finished formulations to better protect patients and strengthen supply chain resilience.

The next Fight the Fakes Week is scheduled between 4 – 10 December 2023.

- Fight the Fakes Week 2022 programme and campaign: <https://fightthefakes.org/week/5th-fight-the-fakes-week/>.
- Registration to the flagship event of Fight the Fakes Week “**Keeping patients safe by securing the medicines supply chain**”: <https://fightthefakes.org/register-now-keeping-patients-safe-securing-the-global-medicines-supply-chain/>
- For further info, please contact the Fight the Fakes Secretariat at secretariat@fightthefakes.org.

About Fight the Fakes Alliance

The [Fight the Fakes Alliance](#) (aka ‘Fight the Fakes’) is a multi-stakeholder non-profit association that aims to raise awareness about the dangers of falsified and substandard medicines. It gives a voice to those who have been personally impacted and shares the stories of those working to put a stop to this threat to public health. It seeks to build a global movement of organizations and individuals who will shine a light on the threat these so-called medicines pose to patient safety and health systems and to achieving universal health coverage. Fight the Fakes’ diverse membership shares the belief that coordination among all stakeholders working along the medical supply chain is essential if we are to tackle this global health threat.

Membership of the Alliance is open to business and non-profit organizations, as well as academic institutions and youth groups. Private sector companies can join the Alliance as corporate partners via a separate membership scheme. Please contact secretariat@fightthefakes.org for further information.