

Serialisation of Individual Pills to Defeat Counterfeiters

At present, proposals to prevent falsified medicines entering supply networks has focussed on increasingly sophisticated packaging including tamper evident seals, electronic recording of unique serialised package identities, or the use of assays in the sampling of purported therapeutic drugs. An alternative solution, being developed by Dr Phil Harrison and colleagues, is to use sets of four and six machine-actuated pins to add micro-indentation codes on to individual pills themselves.

The developers of the technology claim that precise control of the height of these indentations could allow a six dot code to carry one of 14 billion unique codes which would allow for a pill and its packaging to carry a common serialised identity, which could be electronically read. According to the developers, the implementation of this system within pharmaceutical manufacturing appears feasible given that pills are created using injection moulding techniques.

Whilst promising, this technology is still in an early phase of development, with the team currently working on the scanner required to read these codes and the development of the six pin coding technology. A greater challenge for the developers might be how this relatively simple intervention could be aligned to the processes and practice of dispensing in both acute and primary care settings. Further information about this developing technology can be found in this [BBC News website article](#).

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