World Health Organization

20, AVENUE APPIA – CH-1211 GENEVA 27 – SWITZERLAND – TEL CENTRAL +41 22 791 2111 – FAX CENTRAL +41 22 791 3111 – WWW.WHO.INT

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Medical Product Alert N° 4/2017
Falsified Penicillin V circulating in Cameroon

This Medical Product Alert relates to falsified Penicillin V (phenoxymethyl penicillin) circulating in Cameroon, and recently reported to WHO. Phenoxymethyl penicillin is used to treat particular bacterial infections and is listed as a WHO Essential Medicine and key anti-biotic.

In September 2017, an NGO identified a product labelled as Pencillin-V Tablets being sold at a street market in the south-west region of the country.

Product details are shown below:

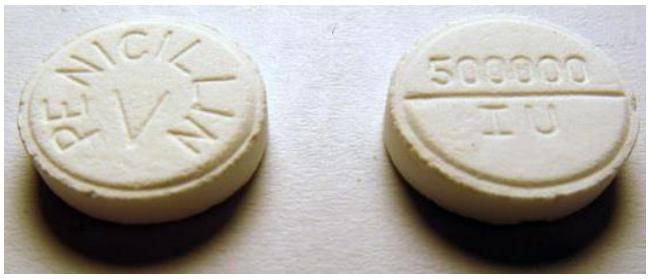
Product Name	**PENICILLIN-V TABLETS**
Batch Number	190
Expiry Date	Oct 2019
Manufacturing date	April 2015
Stated active pharmaceutical ingredient	Phenoxymetgyl penicillin
Stated Manufacturer	OXFORD PHARMA CO. LTD, BELGIUM

Further investigation has revealed the following:

- The stated manufacturer does not exist in Belgium.
- The label contains spelling mistakes and inaccuracies such as the strength/composition.
- Laboratory analysis indicates that the tablets do not contain any penicillin V (phenoxymethyl penicillin) but instead contain 50 mg of paracetamol.

It should be noted that the paracetamol content is sufficient for an antipyretic (fever reduction) effect if the tablets are taken according to the label directions. This may deceive patients and healthcare professionals into believing that this product is effective and delay the seeking of an appropriate treatment for the infection. There have been no known adverse reactions reported to WHO at this stage.

Photographs of the falsified Penicillin-V are shown below:



WHO requests increased vigilance within the supply chains of countries likely to be affected by this falsified product. This falsified product is presented in plastic containers of 500 tablets, as such, increased vigilance should include hospitals, clinics, health centres, wholesalers, distributors, pharmacies and any other suppliers of medical products.

If you are in possession of the above product, please do not use. If you have taken this falsified product, or if you suffer an adverse event having taken this product, please seek immediate advice from a qualified healthcare professional, and report the incident to your local Ministry of Health/National Medicines Regulatory Authorities/National Pharmacovigilance Centre.

It is necessary to ensure that all medical products are obtained from authentic and reliable sources. Their authenticity and condition should be carefully checked. Seek advice from a healthcare professional if there is any doubt.

National health authorities are asked to immediately notify WHO if this falsified products is discovered in their country. If you have any information concerning the manufacture, distribution, or supply of these products, please contact rapidalert@who.int