

# China breaks up fake medicine racket

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China said Friday it had busted a gang that produced and sold fake medicine -- some made of animal feed -- arresting 114 suspects and seizing more than 65 million counterfeit tablets.

China has frequently been hit by fake drug scandals despite government pledges to improve supervision of the industry, triggering growing public outrage over lax controls and official corruption.

The Ministry of [Public Security](#) said in a statement that around 1,000 police officers raided 117 dens and pharmacies that produced and sold fake drugs.

The raids were the result of a four-month investigation during which police discovered that the gang repackaged expired pharmaceuticals, or used dangerous ingredients such as [animal feed](#) and chemical pigments to make tablets.

"In order to make the fake drugs similar to the real medicine in colour, weight and other senses, some even added iron powder and diazepam (used to treat [anxiety disorders](#)) into their products... which caused huge harm to patients," it said.

The statement did not mention whether anyone had died or fallen ill after taking the counterfeit medicines or when the raids occurred.

Most of the fake drugs were sold to clinics and pharmacies outside city centres or in the countryside, and the sellers used newspapers, magazines

and particularly the Internet for promotion, it said.

The case is the latest in a string of food and [drug safety](#) scandals to hit the nation.

In 2007, Zheng Xiaoyu, former head of the State [Food and Drug Administration](#), was executed for accepting \$850,000 in [bribes](#) in exchange for granting approval for hundreds of medicines, some of which were later found to be dangerous.

The case triggered governmental pledges to improve supervision of the country's food and drug industries, but incidents have nevertheless erupted since then.

One of the biggest scandals emerged in 2008 when huge amounts of the industrial chemical melamine were found to have been illegally added to dairy products, killing at least six babies and sickening another 300,000.

More recently in September, the government arrested 32 people over the sale of cooking oil made from leftovers taken from gutters.

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