USP United States Pharmacopeia
DQI Drug Quality and Information Program

USAID

A global initiative for quality medicines and their appropriate use.

What is Poor Drug Quality?

Poor quality medicines do not meet official standards for strength, quality, purity, packaging, and/or labeling. They may be legally registered, innovator or generic products, or they could be counterfeits – deliberately mislabeled for identity, strength or source. Whether counterfeit or unintentionally substandard, poor quality drugs have serious health implications including treatment failure, adverse effects, increased morbidity, mortality, development of drug resistance, and wasted resources. Recent reports indicate the availability of substandard and counterfeit drugs has reached a disturbing proportion in many low-income countries.

The United States Pharmacopeia Drug Quality and Information program is addressing the problem.

- **Disseminating information –** To help monitor trends in poor drug quality, USP DQI publishes a quarterly matrix of drug quality problems reported since 1997. Summarized reports of substandard and counterfeit drugs found in USAID-assisted countries are organized by region and updated regularly. The drug quality matrix serves as a tool to increase awareness about the gravity of this problem among health care professionals, the general public, and policy makers; it is available on the USP DQI website, www.uspdqi.org.
- **Training –** USP DQI evaluates quality assurance systems and USP chemists and quality control experts provide training in basic drug testing methods, good laboratory practices, and proper documentation to strengthen drug quality control labs.
- **Surveillance** – Working with national disease control programs, local universities and other organizations, USP DQI builds local capacity to collect and test drug samples from private and public sector dispensing points, e.g., hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and retailers, to monitor the quality of accessible products in a country or region.
- **Good manufacturing practices** – In collaboration with WHO, USP DQI has visited factories and is providing technical assistance to manufacturers to help them improve manufacturing processes and environment so they can assure products leaving the factory are of good quality.
- **Encouraging regional and international collaboration** – USP DQI develops conferences and regional meetings on approaches to improving drug quality in collaboration with other organizations including the Drug Information Association, Roll Back Malaria, the Malaria Action Coalition, WHO Office of Essential Drugs and Medicines/Quality, Safety and Efficacy, WHO Regional Offices**,** among others.

For more information contact:

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