International News

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Text messaging service battles counterfeit drugs in India

Patients in India will soon be able to perform their own quality control checks on prescription drugs. As of 2016, 3% of pharmaceuticals marketed in India were not up to standard, while 0.023% were counterfeit. A new text messaging service will aid consumers in distinguishing quality drugs from counterfeit or substandard products.
In the next three months, pharmaceutical companies are scheduled to begin printing identification codes on the labels of their best sellers to eliminate fake duplications of the top 300 drug brands. “This is to give confidence among the public about the genuineness and quality of the product,” said an official of the Drugs Technical Advisory Board. “This will also help inspectors track and catch counterfeit products moving in the market.”

Along with a unique fourteen-digit number for each bottle or strip that is produced by reputable drug companies, labels will include a company cell phone number where patients can retrieve detailed information about the manufacturer and expiration date of the specific strip or bottle that they have purchased. Read the full story (https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/soon-a-text-message-will-be-enough-to-spot-fake-medicines/articleshow/64297684.cms).

WHO publishes list of essential diagnostics

Inaccurate diagnoses are a major barrier to access of much-needed treatments and often lead to the administration of wrong treatments. As a result, sufferers may develop more serious health conditions and/or spread contagious diseases throughout the population.

To address the global issue, the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed and published its first Model List of Essential In Vitro Diagnostics (EDL) (http://www.who.int/medical_devices/diagnostics/WHO_EDL_2018.pdf), which comprises the tests required to diagnose the world's most common conditions and priority diseases (for example: HIV, tuberculosis, and human papillomavirus). “An accurate diagnosis is the first step to getting effective treatment,” explained Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of WHO. “No one should suffer or die because of a lack of diagnostic services, or because the right tests were not available.”

The list is intended to serve as the global standard reference for all countries to aid health care professionals in using health care resources more efficiently to diagnose patients more effectively. Practitioners may also adapt the list for applicability to local needs with WHO’s support.

The EDL will be updated regularly, and the content will grow to include more tests in a variety of categories such as antimicrobial resistance and emerging pathogens. Read the full story (http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/15-05-2018-first-ever-who-list-of-essential-diagnostic-tests-to-improve-diagnosis-and-treatment-outcomes).

Nurse develops app to improve population health

Health is made of a number of factors, many of which are associated with the environments in which we live. Much relevant data exist in the form of large sets of statistics that are gathered and provided by governments, but the data are often interpreted in an abstract way, which is entirely removed from the people who are affected by the documented environmental factors. The impacts and interactions of such factors are not immediately apparent from the datasets alone. Therefore, the Empathic Cultural Mapping project (https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=cf6e32ad38fa48189a3f958321dd9cec) seeks to close that gap.

Susan Goopy, a registered nurse and professor at the University of Calgary (http://www.ucalgary.ca/), AB, Canada, partnered with the Taylor Family Digital Library, the City of Calgary, and community groups to launch the project. Using datasets from sources such as the City of Calgary and Calgary Police Service, the Empathic Cultural Mapping project creates interactive maps and visuals combined with personal experiences of six newcomers to the city.

One factor that the project explores is the experience of commuting via public transit in the city. “Knowing that active transportation can have significant positive effects in reducing the incidence of the ‘bog [sic] four’ chronic diseases, it is important that we look for ways to give people more real choices,” said Goopy.
The project is expected to inform city planning with the goal of aiding citizens to live healthier lifestyles. Read the full story (https://www.ucalgary.ca/utoday/issue/2018-05-03/nursing-researchers-storytelling-tool-brings-together-small-stories-and-big-data).

Public library partners with street outreach nurses

Patrons of the public library in Thunder Bay, ON, Canada, can now conveniently access a range of medical services in the library, such as sexually transmitted infection testing, wound care, naxolone kit training, and counselling. The new program was made possible through a partnership with a group of street outreach nurses. After Tina Tucker, director of communities at the library, noticed the nurses’ vehicle stationed in the neighborhood, she invited them to offer their services inside.

Health care services can be difficult to access by those in need. To offer the services at convenient locations breaks down the barriers and leads to a healthier population. “I think it’s an awesome way for us to be able to deliver a service that would be unexpected in libraries, but is helpful for the people that use us every day,” said Tucker. Read the full story (http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/library-street-outreach-nurses-1.4669927).

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