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## US counterfeit drug seizures up 200 per cent in 2011

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Seizures of counterfeit pharmaceuticals by US customs tripled in 2011 compared to the previous year, with a domestic value of \$16.8m, some \$11m higher than in 2010.

Pharmaceuticals were seized with a higher frequency than any other product category in what the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) calls the "consumer safety and critical technology" category, which includes commodities that can pose a serious threat to the health and safety of Americans.



Overall, pharmaceuticals were in third place behind consumer electronics (with \$39m-worth of seizures) and footwear (\$26m), just ahead of optical media (\$15.6m) and clothing (\$14.7m).

The \$16.8m domestic value refers to the purchase value of the infringing merchandise, including duties, freight charges and other fees. At retail prices, the value of seized pharmaceutical shipments would be around \$25m.

Fake medicines accounted for 1,239 seizures by customs, 28 per cent of the total number of cases in the consumer safety and critical technology category, and 9 per cent of the 24,792 seizures in total.

"The value of consumer safety and critical technology seizures soared to more than \$60m due to an increase in pharmaceutical and perfume seizures," said the CBP in its [report](#).

Part of the reason for the increase was a number of successful enforcement efforts targeting counterfeit medicines and perfumes, which resulted in an increase in the number of seizures.

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Overall, the total value of all goods seized in 2011 was \$178m at domestic values, down around 5 per cent on 2010 levels thanks to a rising number of high-volume but low-value seizures, according to the CBP.

China remained the primary source of counterfeit goods across all categories, representing 62 per cent of all seizures by value, with the value of pharmaceutical seizures from China increasing by more than \$4.3m and the value of perfume seizures up \$7m on the prior year.

Meanwhile, India and Pakistan both featured in the top 10 source countries in 2011, mainly due to seizures of counterfeit pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceutical seizures accounted for 86 per cent of the value of seizures from India and 85 per cent from Pakistan, said the CBP.

The top 10 source countries - in descending order - were: China; Hong Kong; India; Pakistan; Taiwan; Switzerland; Malaysia; South Korea; UK; and Mexico.

Other trends that can be gleaned from the report include a shift towards international mail and express courier services for transporting illegal merchandise and the continued growth of websites selling counterfeit goods directly to the public.

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