Debunking Medical Myths: Using Some Pharmaceutical Drugs After The Expiry Date

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SOLID DOSAGE FORMS ARE MORE STABLE

Researchers have investigated several variables that affect drug stability. A study performed in 2019 found that solid dosage drugs, i.e. tablet or pill form, have the longest shelf life when compared to liquid dosage forms.

RX DRUGS LAST LONGER IN IDEAL STORAGE CONDITIONS

The FDA Shelf Life extension program (SLEP) has found that 88% of 122 different drugs stored under ideal conditions should have their expiration dates extended more than 1 year, with an average extension of 66 months, and a maximum extension of 278 months.

PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURERS BENEFIT FROM SHORT EXPIRY DATES

Hospitals, governments, and pharmacies keep stockpiles of drugs for emergency use and as supplies for sales. There are financial benefits for pharmaceutical companies if these stockpiles must be replenished frequently. This is why expiration dates should be independently verified by third-party sources. Disposal of still viable medications for the financial gain of pharmaceutical conglomerates, while some countries go without access to medications, is immoral and unacceptable.

CALL TO ACTION

When stored in appropriate conditions, most pharmaceutical drugs are safe to use for at least one year longer than their provided expiration date. Expired drugs often have diminished function but over-the-counter medications rarely have any deleterious effects.

New legislation needs to be passed that requires pharmaceutical companies to provide expiration dates which reflect the drug's function and stability, rather than the guarantees of the company. A recommended solution to this issue could be to set a preliminary expiration date and update them based on results of ongoing long term trials.