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## Abstract

In America, recent growth in the popularity of Chinese herbal/patent medicines (CHM/CPM) has generated concerns as to the safety of these and other herbal remedies. Lack of strict federal regulations has lead to the possibility of improper labeling and even adulteration of these products with western drugs or other chemical contaminants. Our laboratory has conducted an analytical study to determine the presence of undeclared pharmaceuticals and therapeutic substances within CHM/CPM sold in New York City's Chinatown. Ninety representative samples randomly purchased in the form of pills, tablets, creams and teas were screened by appropriate

analytical techniques including HPLC, GC/MS and HPLC. Five samples contained nine different western pharmaceuticals. Two of these samples contained undeclared or mislabeled substances. One sample contained two pharmaceuticals contraindicated in people for whom the product was intended. Drugs identified include promethazine, chlormethiazole, chlorpheniramine, diclofenac, chlordiazepoxide, hydrochlorothiazide, triamterene, diphenhydramine and sildenafil citrate (Viagra<sup>®</sup>).



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## Keywords

Forensic science; Chinese herbs; Adulteration; Gas chromatography–mass spectrometry

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