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NEWS: Microholograms Protect 10 Million Drug Packets

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Optaglio, the research organisation based in the Czech Republic, which specializes in **high resolution e-beam lithography security holograms**, claims it has delivered anti-counterfeit protection for more than 10 million drug packets in Q4 2017, mostly technologies for covert or forensic protection to supplement visible elements.

The company believes its technology is helping to identify even those **fakes** which already overcame the basic protective barrier and got into the supply chain.

“It is great news for patients and awful news for counterfeiters. Even if the counterfeiters succeed in imitation of a basic protection element, other inspection levels are still available,” explained **Tomas Karensky, senior research manager in Optaglio**. “Usual technological races between defenders and attackers can be eliminated. If the attacker overcomes the first level of defence, he or she does not know whether the packaging includes other security features. It makes their situation **extremely difficult**.”

Hidden elements, such as invisible or infrared ink, have been already applied on drug packets. However, Optaglio’s microholograms are more **advanced** and more **resistant** to imitation attempts, it claims.

Microholograms are tiny particles that can be added into paper and look like metallic dust, if seen by a naked eye. With a magnifier, a user can spot regular shapes and holographic surface. Forensic enquiry shows holograms, **including all visual effects**, on each grain.

The World Health Organisation says that fake drugs cause up to one million deaths each year. Although different protection elements and robust trace-and-track systems are implemented, the counterfeiters are still successful. It is estimated that up to **50%** of the drugs in online shops are **fakes**, often equipped with an imitation protection elements such as watermarks or very simple holograms.

It is expected that implementation of microholograms for drug protection will continue in 2018.

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