As the coronavirus pandemic ripples across the globe, a parallel but lesser-known crisis is growing in its' shadow: the rise of substandard and falsified medical products claiming to prevent, detect, treat, and even cure COVID-19.

In the absence of a coronavirus vaccine, falsified in vitro diagnostic (IVD) test kits, face masks, gloves, sanitizers and medicines have surged globally. Since 11 March 2020, the day that the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic, millions of dollars’ worth of falsified medical products have been seized by law enforcement agencies. Operating both online and offline, criminals are exploiting fearful populations, shortages of drugs and personal protective equipment caused by the crisis. Substandard and falsified medical products may fail to treat or may worsen disease and in worst-case scenarios can lead to death.
Introduction and the role of UNODC in the fight against substandard and falsified medical products

Ms. Riikka Puttonen, Programme Manager, UNODC

The rise of substandard and falsified medical products during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ms. Oksana Pyzik, Founder of University College London (UCL) Fight the Fakes & Senior Teaching Fellow UCL School of Pharmacy

Substandard and falsified medical products - Organised criminality hiding in plain sight

Mr. Hugo Bonar, Regulatory Consultant and former Enforcement Manager of the Health Products Regulatory Authority, Ireland

Moderator

Ms. Flavia Romiti, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Education for Justice initiative, UNODC