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Description

A crucial medicine needed to treat a rare but curable type of leukemia is in short supply with a mere two week supply left in the U.S. The drug, methotrexate, cures nearly 90% of the roughly 3,500 American children and teens diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia every year.

Keywords

Cancer, Leukemia, Drug, Methotrexate, Shortages, Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, ALL, Cure, Treatment, Ben Venue Laboratories, Generic, Medications, Prescription Drugs, Pharmaceutical, Companies, FDA, Food and Drug Administration, Health Care, Healthcare, System

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APA

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

Transcript
Drug Shortage May Put Children in Danger
BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
We have disturbing health news to report tonight. Put it this way, imagine being the parent of a sick child with a form of cancer that's very dangerous, but very treatable at the same time with the right medicine. Then imagine how you'd feel being told you can't get the medicine because of a sudden shortage. Our Chief Science Correspondent Robert Bazell has our report.
Unidentified Doctor: Just take some deep breaths.
ROBERT BAZELL, reporting:
Finali Verma and Kevin McGuire are two of about 3,000 children around the country whose lives could be in danger because of a sudden shortage of a common inexpensive drug.
Dr. JOHN MARIS (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia): Till now we've been able to dodge a bullet, but we're very worried that this is going to become a very acute and very severe problem very soon.
BAZELL: The children have a rare but viral kind of leukemia, ALL, that is almost always curable. A critical part of that treatment is a drug called methotrexate. But there is only about a two-week supply left in the entire country. Parents of ALL kids are scared and furious.
KEVIN McGuire Sr. (Father of Cancer Patient): I can only hope that supplies last. And it's just not for my son, it's for, you know, the next family that walks through the doors of this hospital also.
BAZELL: The methotrexate shortage is in large part due to problems at this plant in Ohio, shuttered voluntarily because of manufacturing and quality control problems. But many say there is a bigger issue. This is one of several shortages of relatively inexpensive drugs, mostly cancer medications, that have cropped up around the country in the past few months. Many doctors charge companies choose to make profitable drugs while cutting back on the older ones.
Dr. JACOB GARCIA (Children's Hospital and Research Center at Oakland): A lot of these medications don't make a lot of money for drug companies because they've been around a very long time, they're
generic.

BAZELL: The FDA is urging companies to increase production, but has no enforcement powers. And as this current crisis shows, decisions about which drugs are manufactured and in what quantities can have huge impacts on the most vulnerable of patients. Robert Bazell, NBC News, Oakland.