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FDA Approves First Digital Pill

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the country's first drug with a digital ingestion tracking system.

Abilify MyCite is a pill that digitally tracks whether patients have taken the medication. The pill contains a sensor that, once ingested, sends a message to a patient's wearable patch, which then transmits the information to a smartphone application. This voluntary process allows patients, caregivers, and physicians to track this information through a web-based portal if the patient has given consent. Experts believe that such digital devices could have a positive impact on public health by addressing a longstanding problem; in this case, that patients do not take their medicines as prescribed.

"Being able to track ingestion of medications prescribed for mental illness may be useful for some patients," said Mitchell Mathis, M.D., director of the Division of Psychiatry Products in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "The FDA supports the development and use of new technology in prescription drugs and is committed to working with companies to understand how technology might benefit patients and prescribers."

The FDA's approval of Abilify MyCite takes us another step closer in the combining of digital technology with medicine.

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