

New 'smart pills' signal your iPhone -- and more from innovative drug company partnerships

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Imagine a "smart pill" containing a biodegradable electronic chip that monitors how your body responds to the medicine, broadcasts the information to your iPhone, which then emails the information to your physician. It may sound like science fiction, but drug companies have been studying just such an approach, according to an article in the current edition of *ACS's Chemical & Engineering News*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

In the cover story, C&EN Senior Editor Rick Mullin cites the smart pill venture between Proteus Biomedical, a start-up company in California, and established Swiss drugmaker Novartis as an illustration of the new and nontraditional research partnerships that are being forged. One major goal is to forge a closer, life-long relationship between pharmaceutical companies and patients, gleaning more information about a medication's effects than now is available from clinical trials.

The story cites numerous examples. Sanofi, a pharma company, and AgaMatrix, a developer of glucose meters, recently announced a product that connects a glucose meter to an [iPhone](#), which can retrieve, archive and transmit data. In another nontraditional coupling, Sanofi is teaming with venture capitalists. They also are collaborating with academic scientists in new ways, partnering on projects early on. PTC Therapeutics and Roche are joining forces with SMA Foundation to

include the patient perspective in developing drugs for spinal muscular atrophy. Even insurance companies are getting involved — Humana recently teamed with Pfizer, the world's biggest drug company, and Medco Health Solutions, a pharmacy benefits management firm, to reduce inefficiencies in getting drugs to patients. Experts point out that these joint ventures could provide detailed information on how individual patients respond to therapy and could help usher in an era of personalized [medicine](#).

More information: Odd Couplings - cen.acs.org/articles/90/i7/Odd-Couplings.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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