

Drug companies moving toward green goals

May 31 2012

Many pharmaceutical companies in a new survey are making progress in embracing the guiding principles of green chemistry, which seek to minimize the use of potentially hazardous substances in producing medications, reduce the generation of waste and operate in other environmentally friendly ways. That's the conclusion of the cover story in the current edition of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society (ACS), the world's largest scientific society.

In the article, C&EN Senior Correspondent Ann M. Thayer points out that the principles of [green chemistry](#) have been gaining momentum since 1998 when chemists Paul Anastas, Ph.D., and John C. Warner, Ph.D., published a list of 12 [guiding principles](#). Their guidelines advocate reducing the use of potentially toxic chemicals, reducing waste and energy usage and increasing the efficiency of chemical reactions. Thayer notes that it took several years for [pharmaceutical companies](#) to translate those principles into measurable goals for environmentally sound research, development and production. To see how they are coming along, Thayer talks with Will Watson, a researcher at a U.K. consulting firm, who surveyed 21 pharmaceutical and chemical makers about their green chemistry practices.

Watson found that most firms are making progress toward implementing green chemistry principles, although they are approaching them in different ways. Many are measuring themselves by how much waste their processes generate, although there is not yet a standard metric for the industries. About half of the firms surveyed wait until they are

making hundreds of grams of their desired product in early development before applying green principles, ignoring what one former Pfizer executive describes as "millions of pounds of waste a year" from smaller-scale experiments. Thayer reports that a roundtable of pharmaceutical companies at the ACS' Green Chemistry Institute is helping its members compare progress and share best practices.

Provided by American Chemical Society

Citation: Drug companies moving toward green goals (2012, May 31) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-05-drug-companies-green-goals.html>

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