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Chinese drugs contain oil from restaurant drains

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Singapore: A recent report by the Chinese national media has claimed that gutter oil is being used to make antibiotics, following which Chinese officials have told pharmaceutical firms to check their suppliers.

Officials are now investigating the operations of companies that use gutter oil rather than more expensive soy bean oil in their production process. Gutter oil is reprocessed kitchen waste dredged from restaurant drains.

There have been several controversies in China in the recent past, associated with the use of gutter oil in various industries. In the month of April, state-run media reported on how officials cracked a whip on underground workshops that used decomposing animal fat and organs to produce the gutter oil. In September 2011, police arrested 32 people in an operation to prevent the sale of gutter oil. More than 100 tonnes of oil that were being produced by six underground factories were seized in raids across 14 provinces.

Moreover, in 2008, at least six babies died and another 300,000 fell ill by drinking infant formula contaminated with the chemical melamine.