



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2004 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Riley R. Sisk	Project Number J1717
Project Title Candy or Medicine? Children May Be Confused	
Abstract Objectives/Goals Will young children be able to tell the difference between some candy and medicine, and therefore be at risk of poison or overdose? Purpose: A lot of medicine looks just like candy and is a danger to children. Hypothesis: I think that the much medicine looks so much like candy that a child will not know the difference. Methods/Materials Materials: over-the-counter Medicines and Candy Look-A-Likes, graph paper, index cards, glue, varnish, markers, camera, and 20 children between the ages of 4-6. Before testing, I went to a pharmacy and a drug store to look at medicines and candy with a Pharmacist. I then chose the ones I thought were the most confusing. I decided to narrow my research to just over-the-counter medications for the purpose of testing. The procedure for testing: 1. Get permission from parents of Kindergarten class to participate in study. 2. On separate index cards, glue and varnish an actual medication to it and write the name on the back. 3. Do this for 8 medicines and 4 candies (names provided in full report). 4. In the classroom with teacher present, ask children one by one, "Is this candy or medicine?". 5. Record your results on a chart about each one with a "M" if they guessed medicine, a "C" if they guessed candy. 5. Tally the results and recorded on a graph. The results showed that for the 8 medicines that were shown to the children, all but one had the majority of the children confused as they thought the medicine sample was candy. Results Children were confused in the majority of the cases. They thought the medicine was candy. Conclusions/Discussion My conclusion is that my hypothesis is correct and children are confused about some medicine being candy. Because of this, they are in danger of ingesting a pill that could be harmful, poisonous or even deadly. To make it even more confusing, I found many of the medicines to even smell good. I think that the coating on the outside of pills should NOT look like candy and should NOT taste good. Also, I found packaging of over the counter medicines easy to open. This explains why poison control centers have had an increase over the years in calls about children ingesting unprotected medicine.	
Summary Statement A lot of Over the counter medicines look just like candy, therefore young children are at risk of accidental poisonings.	
Help Received Thomas Dembski, Ph.D. pharmacist, Margie Sisk- direct supervision	