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Linguistic analyses of drug trade names are of interest because they reveal the challenges of uniquely identifying proprietary medicines and because responses to these challenges can have a range of implications: health (medication errors), commercial (compromised sales figures of specific brand names), and legal (protection of industrial property rights).

Based on a corpus of trade names for three categories of medicines (non-opioid analgesics and antipyretics, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and antimalarials), we do a pragmatic-semantic analysis of drug names marketed in Russia. In part, our objectives are to determine how resourceful manufacturers have been in assigning trade names to drugs; to ascertain whether and how trade naming contributes to unfair trade practices and to the potential for adverse drug events; to identify challenges that drug-naming practices pose to regulatory authorities and the legal framework within which these authorities operate. The study consists of both a review and a critical analysis of the factors that structurally influence drug advertising.