



# Drug Information Bulletin

*Drug Information Centre (DIC)*

*Indian Pharmaceutical Association*

*Bengal Branch*

*Tele fax: 033 24612776, E-mail: [ipabengal.dic@gmail.com](mailto:ipabengal.dic@gmail.com)*

*Web Site: <http://www.ipabengal.org>*

*Contact: 09830136291*

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*Regulatory Affairs Division (RAD), IPA*

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## *Editorial*

Pharmacy community in India protested the recent move of converting “quacks” as “Pharmacist” for running retail Pharmacy in India. Pharmacists are an integral part of the health care system and are working hard for the improvement of the health care of the general mass. The Pharmacy practice in our country is regulated by two acts, which are Pharmacy Act 1948, and Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940. Engagement of Pharmacists in serving the prescription of a registered practitioner has been mandatory by an amendment of sec 42 of Pharmacy Act 1940, in the year of 1984 and it was further bolstered by the amendment of Rule 65 of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945 in the same year to protect the health of the people. The pharmacists are saving millions of lives through counseling about proper use of medicines.

Recently a vested interest group is moving with an ulterior motive for creating a group of “Quacks” as pharmacists giving misleading information to the Central Government. We are strongly opposing this move, because at this moment there is no dearth of Pharmacists in our country, but there may be an unequal distribution. Now we are getting more than one lakh of Pharmacists per year from more than 1500 colleges. Moreover thousands of pharmacists are jobless or under employed at this moment. If this step is taken by the Govt. it will jeopardize the healthcare system by compromising quality of health care and will result millions of jobless pharmacist as well as closure of the Pharmacy colleges, which will have tremendous impact on the economy of our country.

Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) has submitted a representation against this move to the Union Health Minister and requested all state Government & all Drugs Controllers for immediate implementation of Pharmacy Practice Regulation 2015 ([www.ipapharma.org](http://www.ipapharma.org)). Experts believe that though some other organizations along with some Pharmacy college authorities have protested this move, a more intensified movement throughout India is expected to stall this move to protect the quality of health care in India.



**Dr. Subhash C. Mandal**  
**Editor**

**E mail: [subhash.mandaldr@gmail.com](mailto:subhash.mandaldr@gmail.com)**  
**Mob. 9830136291**

## **Delhi high court sets aside Centre's decision to ban 344 fixed dose combination medicines December 1, 2016**

The Delhi high court has set aside the Centre's decision to ban 344 fixed dose combination (FDC) medicines, including well known brands like Corex cough syrup, Vicks Action 500 extra and D'Cold reoorts TOI.

The court gave the order after hearing arguments of companies like Pfizer, Glenmark, Procter and Gamble and Cipla, the central government and some NGOs like All India Drug Action Network.

The court had on March 14 stayed the Centre's March 10 ban on 344 FDC drugs and this interim order was passed in each and every case filed before it thereafter.

As per drug companies the government has not properly implemented the powers under section 26A (power to prohibit manufacture of drugs and cosmetics in public interest) of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, under which the ban was ordered. The ban order was passed without considering clinical data and the grounds that safer alternatives were available. The government had banned over 300 FDC drugs on the ground that they involve "risk" to humans and safer alternatives were available.

As per the March 10 notification, "On the basis of recommendations of an expert committee, the central government is satisfied that it is necessary and expedient in public interest to regulate by way of prohibition of manufacture for sale, sale and distribution for human use of said drugs in the country."

The Centre had argued that the FDC medicines are "new drugs" and thus, require licence from Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for sale and manufacture. Also there were no valid licences for making any of the banned FDCs and added it was difficult to implement any action at state level. However, it had also said that the lack of approval for these FDCs were a secondary

issue and the primary focus was that they "lacked safety and efficacy" and thus, "ban was the only answer". As per them the banned FDCs had no "therapeutic justification".

AIDAN, argued that there were nearly 40,000 FDC drugs in Indian market and since the regulatory control over such medicines was allegedly "illusory", the Centre's decision to ban some of them "was the only move".

## **Japan plans annual review of drug prices**

Japan will overhaul its prescription drug pricing system, with the main focus on an annual review of drug prices instead of every-other-year reviews. The government hopes the shift toward more frequent price reviews will reflect downward market trends and lead to lower government-set drug prices.

Ref. [Nikkei Asian Review](#)

## **Malaria prevention drugs to older youths may curb transmission, study finds**

A study by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Senegal's Cheikh Anta Diop University found that providing seasonal malaria chemoprevention to youths older than 5 in Senegal during a high malaria season decreased cases by more than 50% in children up to age 10 and 26% in youths older than 10. The findings also showed that accommodating older children in SMC interventions didn't substantially increase treatment delivery time.

Ref. [Reuters](#)

## **WHO ends Zika international emergency declaration**

The World Health Organization has lifted its global health emergency designation for the Zika virus, prompting concerns from some public health experts that the move could stall investments in research and preparedness efforts. However, the CDC said that the WHO's declaration doesn't reduce the urgency of developing Zika vaccines and diagnostics or of understanding its health risks on fetuses and infants.

Ref.: [Reuters](#)

### Thailand reports new Zika cases

Thailand's health ministry confirmed 33 new cases of the Zika virus last week and said it has increased screenings for high-risk groups such as pregnant women. Zika outbreaks have been reported elsewhere in Southeast Asia, but Thailand was the first to confirm Zika-linked microcephaly in infants.

Ref.: [Reuters](#)

### House Passes Medical Cures Bill in US

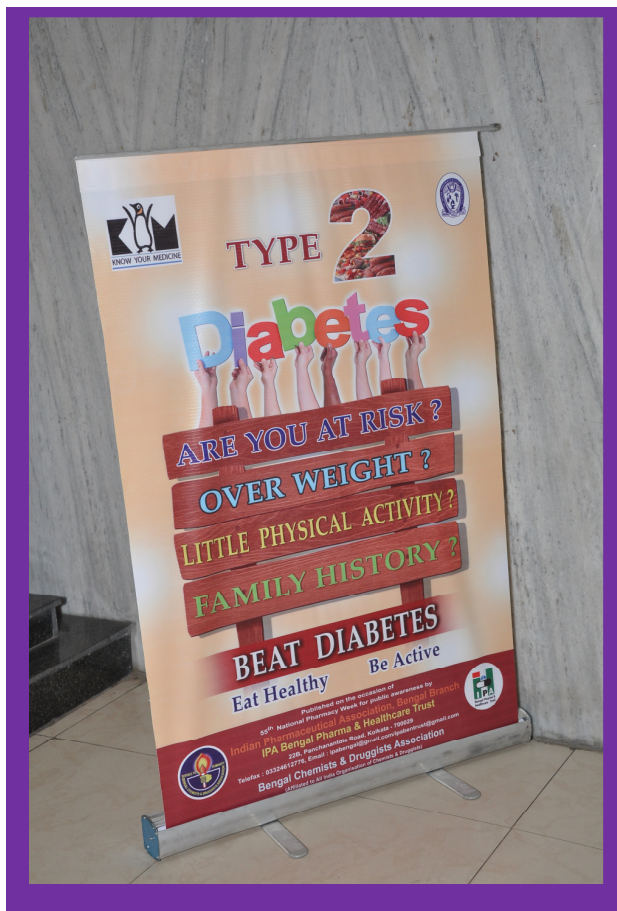
"The legislation, known as the 21st Century Cures Act, passed 392-26...The bill faces a bumpier path in the upper chamber, where Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) have blasted it as a giveaway to pharmaceutical companies. Still, enough Democrats are expected to support the measure to get it across the finish line...The measure allows for ideas like sometimes using 'real world evidence,' rather than more rigorous and time-consuming clinical trials, in drug approvals."

Ref. The Hill

### NICE Recommends First-of-its Kind Asthma Treatment Mepolizumab

"...Mepolizumab is a new type of medicine that targets a specific cause of asthma for the first time. In draft guidance NICE says that adults with severe symptoms should have access to mepolizumab. This includes adults who suffer many asthma attacks or those taking regular oral steroids." [Full](#)

Ref.: NICE Press Release



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**Glimpse of 55<sup>th</sup> National Pharmacy week celebration during 20<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in West Bengal**



Dr. Sashi Panja, MOS, Dept. of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal with dignitaries during inauguration of 55<sup>th</sup> NPW at Kolkata



Releasing of souvenir published during inaugural programme of 55<sup>th</sup> NPW at Kolkata



Releasing of posters during inaugural programme of 55<sup>th</sup> NPW at Kolkata



A moment of the street drama on awareness on health care



A moment of the inaugural session of the National workshop on 27<sup>th</sup> November at Kolkata



Faculty members with organizers of National workshop on "Pharmacists for Healthy India" at Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers, Kolkata

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