



Dear Members,

The month of November usually brings about a slew of activities for IPA members as the National Pharmacy Week (NPW) is celebrated all over India during this month from November 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017. A theme is chosen each year for the NPW to showcase the potential of pharmacists; the theme chosen this year is “Know your Medicines; Ask your Pharmacist”. Post-diagnosis, pharmacists are the most knowledgeable, dependable and readily accessible expert on medicines prescribed to a patient. Pharmacists advise patients about what the medicine is for, the dose to be taken, how many times in a day and how long to be taken, what precautions to follow while on medication, and how to store and safeguard the medicines. Mostly patients and the public are not aware of these virtues of a pharmacist and we must make the best use of the NPW to bring this awareness to people. It is necessary to continuously drill the importance of pharmacists into the minds of all stakeholders in order to make pharmacists an integral part of the healthcare team in our country.

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In addition to the NPW, the WHO promoted World Antibiotic Awareness Week also falls in this month from November 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Antibiotic awareness is essential to prevent the spread of antimicrobial resistance most commonly referred to as AMR. Resistance developed by microorganisms to antibiotics and antimicrobial agents constitutes one of the biggest threats to global health today as it can affect anyone, of any age, in any country. Resistance to antibiotics or antimicrobial agents occurs naturally in microorganisms through a mutation-selection process and exposure to antimicrobial agents is a key driver for the selection of resistant bacterial strains. Widespread misuse of antibiotics by humans and for animals accelerates the process many folds. As a result of the improper use of antibiotics, many infections such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, gonorrhoea and urinary tract infections become harder or near impossible to treat since the available antibiotics are less effective against these infections. As a result, AMR results in increased health care costs, longer hospitalizations, and higher mortality.

Pharmacists world over must step in to arrest the spread of AMR. Pharmacists must ensure that antibiotics are dispensed only when prescribed by a registered medical practitioner, advise patients not to share antibiotics with others or procure antibiotics using an old prescription or take leftover antibiotics. Containing the spread of infection by promoting good hygiene, regular washing of hands, immunization and safe water and food preparation and storing practices is also an area where pharmacists can contribute actively. Pharmacists are encouraged to build awareness among the public about preventing the misuse of antibiotics in the agriculture and veterinary sectors to reduce the chances of emergence of bacterial resistance. WHO in 2015 initiated the world antibiotic awareness week to be held in November every year with the theme “Antibiotics: Handle with care” to achieve the above objectives. IPA, as well as the other organizations working for pharmacy profession, should make the best use of the antibiotic awareness week and the NPW to promote the role and importance of pharmacists for achieving a healthy nation, the “Swasth Bharat”.

*V. S. V. Vadlamudi Rao*

Rao V. S. V. Vadlamudi, Ph. D.,

**Our Mission**

The Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) is the national professional body of pharmacists engaged in various facets of the profession of Pharmacy. The IPA is committed to promote the highest professional and ethical standards of pharmacy, focus the image of pharmacists as competent healthcare professionals, sensitize the community, government and other on vital professional issues and support pharmaceuticals education and sciences in all aspects.

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