

IPA pushes for role of pharmacists in healthcare system, releases booklet on responsible use of medicines

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Thursday, January 21, 2016, 08:00 Hrs [IST]

Keen to push the role of pharmacists in the country with that of other healthcare providers, the Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) supported by the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) recently released its booklet on 'Responsible use of medicines: A layman's handbook'. The main aim behind this initiative is to sensitise all the stakeholders about the fact that effective outcome of medicines depends on not only using correct medicines, but also on how it is being used.

The handbook which was released by the Union minister for health & family welfare, J P Nadda during the Indian Pharmaceutical Congress (IPC) stresses on the importance of pharmacists in the whole process and how they could help in the sensitising end users about the best way to use medicines. Dr. Rao Vadlamudi, president of IPA, pointed out that the information given in this booklet is essential for not only the patients but everybody else too who is in contact with the patients, which includes pharmacists who dispenses medicines, patients who procure them and even the physicians who prescribes them.

He further added that one of the most effective way to ensure the same is to entrust and develop a culture where qualified pharmacists who are the key interpreters between the medicines and the patients to be involved in the healthcare system. "Drug regulators from across the country have appreciated the efforts put into this booklet which is prepared by experts from IPA with full support by PCI after thorough analysis and have reinstated that the information provided in that should be promoted countrywide. We strongly feel that for ensuring better healthcare system, awareness of such booklet should be on the minds of the regulators and physicians," added Dr Rao.

To ensure better reachability, IPA soon plans to produce this handbook in Hindi as well. It is understood that this initiative is a part of IPA's programme, the Campaign for Awareness on Responsible Use of Medicines (CARUM) which was started in the year 2014 and has

developed consumer education posters in various languages. The released handbook is the next major step under the project CARUM.

According to Manjiri Gharat, chairperson of IPA-community pharmacy division (IPA CPD), the 100-page handbook is the first of its kind covering various aspects such as types of medicines, a prescription, its components and importance, storage and handling of medicines, do's and don't's about self-medication, medicines and special conditions such as pregnancy, medicines and food. Though this book was published almost six months back, it was only recently released at the hands of the health minister which implies the importance of it for ensuing patient safety measures.

“Lot of efforts had been put behind this initiative which targets to duly educate and inform the patients about the importance of correctly using the prescribed medicines as we strongly believe that consumer education will go a long way in improving correct use of medicines in our country,” Gharat who along with Raj Vaidya of IPA-CPD with a team of experts coordinated the compilation of this handbook.