Editorial

Greetings from Drug Information Bulletin!

Like the past years Pharmacists of India are going to celebrate 12th World Pharmacist Day on 25th September with great enthusiasm. Pharmacy Council of India has decided that they will celebrate this day as Pharmacists Day in India every year and requested all State Pharmacy Councils, Pharmacy Institutions and professional organizations to celebrate the occasion since 2013. Pharmacists are one of the three main pillars of the health care systems with Doctors and Nurses. Though Doctors Day and Nurses Day are being celebrated since long back, no Pharmacists day was celebrated earlier till 2013 in India. This celebration will be a boost to the pharmacist as a health care provider and certainly recognition to their relentless service to the mankind. As per the sources this day will be celebrated with great enthusiasm throughout the country. There is information that Pharmacy Council of India, State Pharmacy Councils, IPA branches, SEARPharm Forum, IPA student Forum, several other Pharmacy associations, Pharmacy Colleges, Hospitals are going to celebrate the occasion in different ways like- Online interactive discussion, holding health care camps for general public, blood donation camps, Essay & poster competition. This year’s theme is aptly chosen by the FIP “Pharmacy united in action for a healthy world” is very meaningful in this situation. Pharmacists have taken up this opportunity to serve patients by remaining in the frontline during Covid pandemic. IPA along with FIP is trying their best to establish Indian Pharmacists as one of the important player in health care system and pursuing the issue of making Indian pharmacists as a vaccinator like most of other countries.

Dr. Subhash C. Mandal
Editor
E mail: subhash.mandal@gmail.com
Mob.. 9830136291
National Medical Commission initiated action on unethical Practices by a section of doctors and Pharma Companies

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has sought from the Income Tax Department details of doctors who allegedly received freebies from six pharma against whom raids were conducted last month.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the administrative body for the I-T department, in July had accused the makers of the widely-used painkiller of indulging in "unethical practices" and distributing freebies of about Rs 1,000 crore to doctors and medical professionals in exchange for promoting its products.

The Income Tax department had on July 6 raided 36 premises of Bengaluru-based Company across nine states. In a letter on Aug 3, the NMC requested CBDT chairperson Nitin Gupta to "send the names along with registration number and addresses of doctors involved so that those details may be forwarded to state medical councils concerned for information and necessary action".

Source: Outlook

The government is likely to ban popular codeine-based cough syrups and formulations following concerns raised by MPs recently about their misuse

An expert committee set up by the health ministry has recommended the ban on certain codeine-based combinations to curb their abuse, sources told.

The M S Bhatia-led committee has recommended around 14 products to be banned, sources said. These could include other fixed-dose combinations, not just codeine-laced cough syrups.

The use of codeine-based formulations has been under the government scanner for several years. In March 2016, these formulations, including cough syrups, were part of the ban on "irrational" 350-odd fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs, besides wide-selling painkillers, anti-diabetic medicines, and respiratory therapies.

The government had then decided to prohibit the sale of these medicines as they were found to be irrational, “likely to involve risk to human beings”, and without any therapeutic use.

However this was not implemented as the companies challenged the ban, and the court stayed the government’s order. Codeine is an opioid-based analgesic, mostly used to treat coughs, colds, and pain. Due to high rates of abuse of codeine cough syrups, its use is closely monitored and controlled in developed markets, including the US and Europe.

In 2017, the US Food and Drug Administration restricted the use of codeine and tramadol (therapy to treat pain) medicines in children, due to safety risks.

Codeine and its preparations are under schedule H1, which are dispensed against prescription, but most are available over the counter in India.

It is the high time to take a final decision in this issue to protect the public health.

Source: The Health Master

Corbevax gets DCGI nod as COVID-19 booster after two doses of Covishield or Covaxin

Hyderabad-based Biological E. Limited (BE)’s COVID-19 vaccine Corbevax has been approved by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) as a heterologous COVID-19 booster dose to individuals aged 18 years and above after 6 months of administration of primary vaccination (two doses) of Covaxin or Covishield vaccines for restricted use in emergency situations.

In a release issued by the company said that Corbevax is the first such vaccine in India to be approved as a heterologous COVID-19 booster. A heterologous booster is when the third dose is different from the earlier doses.

The company added that Corbevax heterologous booster vaccine was well tolerated and safe. “There were no severe or adverse events of interest for 3 months of follow-up after the booster dose was administered. The Corbevax vaccination slot can be booked through the Co-WIN app or Co-WIN portal. So far, 51.7 million doses of Corbevax have been administered to children across the country, including 17.4 million who have completed the two-dose regimen,” the company stated.
However Biological E-maker of Corbevax hasn’t received World Health Organisation’s emergency use listing for the jab. WHO’s EUL procedure assesses the quality, safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines and is a prerequisite for COVAX vaccine supply. It also allows countries to expedite their own regulatory approval to import and administer COVID-19 vaccines.
Source: The Hindu

A systematic review of COVID-19 and obstructive sleep apnoea
The aims of the study were to review the rapidly emerging COVID-19 literature to determine 1) the relationship between obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) and adverse COVID-19 outcomes and, 2) potential causal mechanisms 3) what effect COVID-19 has had on OSA diagnosis and 4) what effect COVID-19 has had on treatment and management of OSA during this period. PubMed was systematically searched up to 020620. Studies were included if they had examined the relationship between COVID-19 and OSA. Studies were included that were in English and had the full text available. The findings from this study suggest that many of the risk factors and co-morbidities associated for OSA which include obesity, hypertension and diabetes mellitus are associated with poor COVID-19 outcomes. There are plausible mechanisms by which OSA may independently increase one’s risk of morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19 and data from the newly published CORONADO study suggests that OSA treated patients may be at increased risk of death from COVID-19. It is clear that the pandemic has had a major effect on the treatment management and diagnosis of OSA and moving forward it may be necessary to explore new diagnosis and treatment pathways for these individuals.
(reproduced from Sleep Med Rev. 2021 Feb; 55: 101382. Published online 2020 Sep)

Rebound symptoms in Covid-19
A new medRxiv preprint study has found that rebound symptoms occurred in about 27% of patients Covid-19 after their symptoms improved and in 10% patients after their symptoms had resolved. These patients had not received any antiviral drug. 12% tested positive again after earlier negative tests indicating a viral rebound. Women were more likely to experience rebound of symptoms, while the probability of viral rebound was higher in older patients. But the two were unlikely to occur together and was seen in 1-2% of patients.
Source: medRxiv, August 3, 2022

FSSAI Prohibits the Use of ORS Energy Drink Manufacturers
The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed companies manufacturing energy drinks that have trademarks similar to the term ‘ORS’ (oral rehydration salts) to prominently declare that the product is "not an ORS as recommended by the WHO."
In August, the Delhi high court passed an order directing the ministry of health to ensure strict compliance with the misuse of the term ORS.
Following this, in April, the top food regulator took cognizance of the misleading advertisements by energy drink makers selling their products as ORS substitutes.
The product ‘ORS’ is a drug under Drugs and Cosmetics Rules L945, which is used for treating acute diarrhoea and has a specific composition prescribed by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).
“The marketing and labelling of the fruit-based beverages etc. in the name of ORS is not only misleading for the ordinary consumers but also harmful for the patients who may consume such products as ORS, especially in case of children suffering from diseases like diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, etc. may have serious health repercussions," said the official. The companies “having valid trademarks similar to the term ‘ORS’ are further directed to provide a prominent declaration on their front-of-pack either through non-detachable stickers or printing that the product is NOT an ORS formula as recommended by WHO’ or the

7,700 medicine samples declared poor quality
A total of 7,700 samples of medicines were declared not of standard quality and 670 declared spurious or adulterated out of a total 84,874 samples picked for testing during the last three years.

The government data disclosed that a total of 2,652 samples of medicines were declared not of standard quality and 263 were declared spurious or adulterated out of a total 84,874 samples picked for testing during the year 2020-21.

The enforcement actions were carried out in terms of samples tested, number of drug samples declared sub-standard and spurious/adulterated during the last three years. While 164 persons were arrested as the concerned authority initiated prosecutions in the year 2020-21, over 500 such arrests were made in the last three years.

In a reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday, the ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that the manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs in the country are regulated under the provisions of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules, 1945. The regulatory control over the manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs in the country is exercised through a system of licensing and inspection by the State Licensing Authorities (SLAs) appointed by respective State Governments. The SLAs are legally empowered to take action in case of violation of the condition of Licence.

FBOs may use similar meaning phrases without changing the intent," said the official order issued by FSSAI on 14 July.

India’s Cumulative COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage exceeds 205.22 Cr- 04 August 2022

- India’s Cumulative COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage exceeds 205.22 Cr
- Over 3.92 Cr 1st dose vaccines administered for age group 12-14 years
- India’s Active caseload currently stands at 1,36,478
- 19,893 new cases reported in the last 24 hours
- Recovery Rate currently stands at 98.50%
- Weekly Positivity Rate is presently at 4.64%

For details: www.pib.gov.in

---

**Letter from Readers**

**Dear Dr. Mandal,**

Thank you for writing editorial on quality of Generic drugs in this issue...Through your editorial you have tried to promote generic drugs with substantiating documentary proves. Certainly Generic drugs are of standard quality, but a general concept has been created among physicians and masses that branded drugs are best and generic drugs have poor quality.

Since last few years due to tremendous support by Central govt. in promoting generic drugs and also editorial by you and likeminded qualified persons the myth of Generic drugs are being changed slowly. Now more than 9000 Generic Drug stores have been opened throughout the country and their turnover have crossed 10000 crores.

In this regard we the qualified Pharmacists can play major role in patients treatment with less cost. This is easily possible if Pharmacists setup their own Generic drug store (govt provides Rupees five lakhs support) and start patient counseling. This would bring better living hood with respect as better healthcare Professional in society too of Pharmacist.

**Dr R.N.Gupta Eminent Pharmacist**

Vice President, Indian Pharmaceutical Association

---

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**IPA BENGAL PHARMA & HEALTHCARE TRUST SCHOLARSHIP FOR 2021 PASS OUT CANDIDATES FROM WEST BENGAL**

Applications are invited for the above mentioned scholarship in prescribed format available at [www.ipabengal.org](http://www.ipabengal.org) or from the Principal/Director of the respective colleges/Institutions.

Last date of submitting the application: 23.08.2022

Application must reach at:
IPA Bengal Pharma & Healthcare Trust
22 B Panchanontola Road, Trinayani Appartment, 1st Floor, Kolkata-700029

**DISCLAIMER:**

The Newsletter intends to provide updated and reliable information on medicines and other related issues in an attempt to equip healthcare professionals to take informed decision in recommending medicines to the patients. However, they are encouraged to validate the contents. None of the people associated with the publication of the Newsletter nor the organization shall be responsible for any liability for any damage incurred as a result of use of contents of this publication. The brand names of medicines, if mentioned, are for illustration only and the Newsletter does not endorse them.