

Tripura is Happy if Generics related move forms the precursor to a Pan Indian Healthcare Regulatory Authority

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Generics move-Better Late than Never

The good news for all Indians was when the federal government decided to push for generics and put in place necessary laws and regulations if the beneficiaries, especially the poor segments of the society are being prescribed and sold the expensive branded formulations (Refer-<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/mandatory-code-for-doctors-and-chemists-to-ensure-generics-get-precedence-over-branded-drugs/articleshow/58270497.cms>). It would definitely have creased foreheads to many, notably those from the healthcare industry who are involved in vested interests related activities. But millions across India would welcome this move, which should have been brought in practice since a long time back, especially when Indian pharmaceuticals giants have mastered the art of producing quality generics which can have similar results like that of branded formulations at a much lesser price. Reverse engineering and process patent's advantage should be shared with all Indians across the length and breadth of the country. Bioequivalence studies have already proved the efficacy, so what's the harm in prescribing them? The move should have been taken long time back, but for various reasons, had been kept on hold. The sections who have been voicing out their hidden frustration under the garb of concern of the quality of generics, vis-à-vis the branded formulations are the ones who

are included in the segment of vested interests. Furthermore, the directive from MCI that doctors would have to bear the brunt if they do not prescribe generics is a good one, especially if the unethical business practices existing in the healthcare industry, at the cost of poor Indians is to be stopped. (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/doctors-to-face-action-unless-they-only-prescribe-generic-drugs-mci/articleshow/58314973.cms>)

How can Tripura Gain?

A state like Tripura can derive a lot of benefit from having such a regulatory body or even by the generics related move as the residents of this state spend a lot towards healthcare either in their native or by looking for greener healthcare pastures elsewhere in the country, so as to compensate for the lack of advanced treatment and rehabilitation present with the state. Although there has been changes in terms of infrastructure, in the form of two medical colleges and one corporate hospital, there are still incidents that impacts and impinge the common man, due to the absence of a Pan Indian Healthcare Regulatory Authority. Any unethical practices carried out by any of the stakeholders involved in the value chain on the healthcare industry goes absolutely scot free due to the absence of a parent body that otherwise could have made them accountable towards the society for the decisions taken therein. The same holds true for even other states, but the landlocked state of Tripura happens to spend a substantial amount from their accumulated hard earned cash (as majority of the state citizens are alien to the concept of health or medical insurance and the ones who are aware are skeptical to buy them thinking as dead investments, till they are hit hard by the cost of treatment!). The expenses doled out towards healthcare without much of benefit for the end-user would certainly change with the acceptance of generics across the board.

The Necessity for a Pan Indian Regulatory Body

Being a stakeholder who has always been closely related (both directly and indirectly) to the healthcare industry of India, it is evident for yours truly to feel happy like any other common Indian. However, if one wishes to see the bigger picture, then the job accomplished through generics usage is only a part of the whole episode. This could be the first step to bring in stringent rules and regulations followed by close monitoring of the same, so that the hapless customer does not suffer at the hands of unethical nexus of various stakeholders calling the shots in the healthcare industry. In fact, if the country wants to witness a revolution in the industry, which would not only provide quality services to its citizens but also metamorphose the country into a global health tourism destination, there is an urgent need to have a healthcare regulatory body resembling the ones in telecommunication and insurance sectors! Merely having half-baked measures in bits and pieces although appreciable as compared to no decisions of yesteryears, would still only cure the symptom and not the cause that is plaguing the healthcare industry as a whole. Healthcare like education forms the bedrock for every nation and therefore, it is even more vital to have healthy citizens by ensuring the global

best practices are customized and then implemented under the watchful eyes of a pan Indian regulatory body. Every one starting from the doctor, the paramedics, the pharmaceutical company, the chemist, should be made accountable of the decisions they make and negligence on their part owing to whatever reasons should be punished in the strictest possible terms, so that it acts as a deterrent in the future. Furthermore, the beneficiary should have access to all information pertaining to his or her treatment and every stakeholder should necessarily explain the pros and cons in easiest possible ways to the beneficiary so that he/she can take a concerned and informed decision regarding the treatment. Standard prices for all services and medical equipment's should be the order of the day so that customer exploitation from helpless, ignorant and illiterate patients and dependents are stopped once and for all. Surprise and regular audits of all the stakeholders should be made a necessity so as to know the details of the money earned, vis-à-vis the services meted out as well as the success rate of the same. Beneficiary ignorance should not be used as a tool to dupe the hard earned money of the patients and their dependents. It's high time when the demi-god status given to the major drivers of the healthcare industry becomes a thing of the past, as Indians are definitely changing in all regards and therefore, they need to know more about their health, rather than depending on the mercy of a handful few stakeholders of the healthcare industry. As someone rightly said, HEALTH IN INDEED WEALTH!

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