

Banned Drugs: Still Available in India

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ABSTRACT

Drugs undergo rigorous testing before they are introduced into the market. The efficacy as well as safety profiles of the drug are tested, adverse effects of drugs appear only after the drug is used in the general population. These adverse effects are detected through pharmacovigilance. If the adverse effects are severe or the risks of using the drug outweigh the benefits, the country bans the drug. Some drugs may cause adverse effects only when combined with particular drugs. In such cases, only the fixed dose combination is banned and not the individual drugs. This article is related to banned drugs and the products which are still used in medical fraternity.

Keywords: Banned drugs, Pharmacovigilance.

INTRODUCTION

A drug, broadly speaking, is any substance that, when absorbed into the body of a living organism, alters normal bodily function.¹ There is no single, precise definition, as there are different meanings in drug control law, government regulations, medicine and colloquial usage. In legal terms, a drug is 'a chemical substance used in the treatment, cure, prevention, or diagnosis of disease or used to otherwise enhance physical or mental well-being.' Drugs undergo rigorous testing before they are introduced into the market. The efficacy as well as safety profiles of the drug are tested. In spite of this, some adverse effects of drugs appear only after the drug is used in the general population. These adverse effects are detected though a process of regular monitoring after the drug is released called pharmacovigilance.

Reason for Banning a Drug

Adverse drug reactions, or ADRs, are officially described as 'A response to a drug which is noxious and unintended, and which occurs at doses normally used for the prophylaxis, diagnosis or therapy of disease, or for the modification of physiological function'.² Pharmacovigilance is the pharmacological science relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects, particularly long-term and short-term side-effects of medicines.

Drug Controller General of India is the highest authority in India to extend the approval of any drug or to ban a drug. If any

drug is found to have harmful side-effects, the government issues the ban order and all manufacturers and wholesalers are asked not to stock the particular medicine.

Reason for Sale and Purchase of Banned Drug in India (Table 1)

Cost is a key issue for consumers of medicines in developing countries. In many developing countries, medicines can account for up to 90% of household expenditure on health, making the cost of medicine a key determinant in whether or not people have access. The latest reports suggest that India is one of the few countries that export large amount of various banned drugs to different parts of the world. Many of the drugs that have been banned in developed countries are easily available in India.³

In 2005, the Indian National Commission on Macroeconomics and Health labelled 10 out of 25 top selling brands of medicines in the country as being either 'irrational or non-essential or hazardous.' Those brands are listed in the table below and include a number of market leaders³ (Table 2).

CONCLUSION

Many of us do not know about those banned drugs and use them regularly which causes long-term implications in our physical health. The official first needs to lay down stringent laws and direct drug manufactures not to produce those.

Table 1: List of globally banned drugs available in India

Generic names	Use	Reason for ban	Brand names (company)
1. Analgin	Painkiller	Bone-marrow depression	Novalgin, baralgin (aventis)
2. Nimesulide	Painkiller, fever	Liver damage	Nise (Dr Reddy's), Nimulid (Panacea)
3. Phenylpropanolamine	Cold	Brain hemorrhage	D'Cold, vicks action 500
4. Cisapride	Reflux, constipation	Irregular heart beat	Ciza (Intas)
5. Droperidol	Antidepressant	Irregular heart beat	Droperol (Troikka)
6. Furazolidone	Antidiarrheal	Cancer	Furoxone (Glaxo), Lomofen (RPG)
7. Nitrofurazone	Antibacterial	Cancer	Furacin (Glaxo), Emfurazone (Emcure)
8. Piperazine	Antiworms	Nerve damage	Helmazan (Noel)
9. Quiniodochlor	Antidiarrheal	Damage to sight	Enteroquinol (East India)
10. Tegaserod	Ulcerative colitis	Heart attacks, strokes	Ibsinorm (Sun Pharma), tagon (Intas)
11. Thioridazine	Schizophrenia	Abnormal heart beats	Ridazin (Sun Pharma), Thioril (Torrent)
12. Human placenta ext.	Vitiligo	Infection from placenta	Placentrex (Albert David)

'If doctors stop prescribing drugs that are harmful to patients' health, chemists will automatically stop selling since there are no patients asking for it, and hence, manufacturers do not produce it. Certainly, much of the problem can be solved like that,' 'the manufacturers have every reason to sell their products if there are buyers.'

Table 2: Top selling irrational, nonessential of hazardous drugs in India (2005)

Rank	brand	producer	headquarters
	Becosules (Vitamin B ₁₂),	Pfizer,	USA
	Corex (chlorpheniramine + phenylpropanolamine + paracetamol),	Pfizer	USA
	Liv-52 (ayurvedic preparation),	Himalaya,	India
	Dexorange (cyanocobalamin + folic acid)	Franco-Indian	India/France
	Digene Mg(OH) ₂ and Al(OH) ₃ ,	Abbott,	USA
	Combiflam (ibuprofen + paracetamol),	Aventis,	France
	Polybion E (multivitamin B complex),	Merck,	Germany
	Glucon-D (glucose),	Heinz,	USA
	Evion E (Vitamin E),	Merck,	Germany
	Revital (multivitamin),	Ranbaxy	India ⁴

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization run by the Government of India has to made a strict guidelines over the list of drugs that have been banned by European Union and USA.

Note: Nimesulide has just been banned in Ireland, Singapore and Nigeria. Analgin, Furazolidone and Nitrofurazone are banned for use even in animals in the United States. Analgin is banned even in Nepal, Vietnam and Nigeria. (*Source: MIMS, April 2008*).

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