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Editorial

Drug Resistance – A Global Problem

Antibiotic resistance is posing an increase in threat to treating infectious diseases as well as undermining many current advances in medicine. Over 7,00,000 deaths are attributed to drug resistance each year. In India, an additional 20 lakh lives can be lost by 2050 due to drug resistance diseases.

Studies reveal that India consumes the highest number of antibiotics in the world, consuming 13 billion pills against 10 billion in China and 7 billion in the U.S. Over Rs. 1000 crores worth antibiotics are sold every year in India. As a result of such reckless use, the deadly strains of life taking bacteria that are resistant to even the latest generation of antibiotics have been found to be rampant in India. Washington based centre for Disease Dynamics Economics and Policy (C.D.D.E.P.) in the first state of world's antibiotic report, 2015 has reported that the bacteria strain *Klebsiella pneumoniae*'s resistant to the last resort antibiotic class Carbapenems was a whopping 57% in India in 2014, up from 29% earlier. This is a dangerous superbug found in hospitals.

Klebsiella's resistance to a variety of drugs is high – the bug is about 80% resistant to the Class III generation Cephalosporins, 73% resistant to Fluoroquinolones and 63% to Aminoglycosides.

The antibiotics used in India increasing by 43% from 2000 to 2010 resistance to the deadly *E. coli* which causes severe food poisoning, abdominal cramps and severe diarrhoea has been growing in India.

Another report which reveals global trends in drug resistance in 39 countries and antibiotic use in 69 countries again endorses that India has the highest amount of overall antibiotic consumption of all the countries and as many as 58,000 neonatal sepsis deaths are attributable to the drug resistant infections in India.

Realizing the gravity of the problem, the health ministry of India along with central drug regulator, Drug Controller General of India has framed standard treatment guidelines as part of global strategy adopted by all member countries of WHO to fight the menace of drug resistant diseases. ''India is ready with the standard treatment protocol'' as stated by Rajesh Bhatia, Chief Scientific Advisor to the regional director, WHO, Southeast Asia Regional Office. The guidelines will present a blue print with specific norms for doctors, chemists and patients.



The government may soon issue restrictions on prescription and sale of commonly used antibiotics in an attempt to avoid development of drug resistance to infectious diseases.

Doctors and chemists will be required to follow the mandatory protocol and guidelines while prescribing antibiotics. The chemists will have to maintain records of all kinds of antibiotics that they procure and sell along with the doctor's prescription.

Problem of drug resistant diseases in India is not a simple one. It is aggravated due to thousands of unauthorized, unregistered and unscrupulous jholachhap medicos practising unchecked under the cover of various disciplines of alternate medicine administering allopathic drugs. The drug resistant diseases are on the increase especially due to indiscriminate and unethical use of antibiotics and even steroids in treatment by these so-called doctors, the quacks. This type of malpractice goes on unchecked due to inactive attitude of state enforcement bodies.

Therefore, to effectively implement the proposed guidelines of Govt. of India, the national and state level statutory bodies regulating medical disciplines and health providing system shall need to be activated providing them enough teeth for enforcement of guidelines/protocol to combat the menace of drug resistance in treatment of infectious diseases.

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