

2-DAY CHINTAN SHIVIR: **DRUGS: QUALITY REGULATIONS & ENFORCEMENTS**

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The government is working on the vision of reducing import dependency through indigenous production, the government is focusing on the production of high-value pharmaceuticals and high-end medical devices.

- **Shri Mansukh Mandaviya**,
Union Health Minister for Health and Family Welfare; Chemicals and Fertilizers.”

The Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilisers Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated a two-day Chintan Shivir on “Drugs: Quality Regulations & Enforcement” at New Delhi on 26 February 2023. He was joined by Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Bhagwanth Khuba, Minister of State for Chemical and Fertilisers, Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog and Shri Sanjay Bhatia, Lokayukta, Upa-Lokayukta Maharashtra. Health Secretaries & Drug Regulators from various States/UTs are participating in the brainstorming conclave.

In his inaugural address, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya underlined the focus of the deliberative forum, “The Chintan Shivir is a platform for all the stakeholders in the pharma and health sectors to deliberate on pathways for cohesive and synergistic approaches for building robust and resilient regulatory systems. Various agencies across the Centre and states, public-private divide form important components of ensuring that pharmaceuticals manufactured in the country and consumed by domestic and international consumers are of the highest quality and adhere to standard global manufacturing protocols. This will ensure that India’s fame as “Pharmacy of the World” is upheld and we provide pharma products of the highest quality to the consumers”.

The Shivir organised by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in collaboration with the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) brought together all the stakeholders viz; MoHFW, DoP, States/UTs Health Secretaries, States/UTs Drug Controllers, Industry associations etc. on a common platform. The participants at the conclave brainstormed on various facets of producing a sturdy and resilient regulatory system, including sessions on building of trust and confidence in the quality of drugs in the domestic and global market; review predictability; transparency & accountability in the regulation of quality of drugs; effective enforcement of quality, safety and efficacy at the field level; ensuring compliance to Indian pharmacopeia & standards; to develop robust network for Pharmacovigilance and Materiovigilance programs; creation of a unified IT platform for all regulatory activities; to assess regulatory capacity across the States and Centre along with to promote ‘Ease of Doing Business’; and capacity building at the level of the States and National Regulators for regulation of pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Representatives from DGCI, FSSAI, NPPA, DGHS, ICMR, NIPERs, Central Drug Laboratories also participated in the two day deliberations.



COVID-19 HIT CHILDHOOD CANCER TREATMENT: ICMR REPORT 2022



February 15 was International Childhood Cancer Day. As per the World Health Organization, India is home to at least 20% of the global childhood cancer burden, with nearly 75,000 children getting cancer every year. A recent ICMR-NCDIR 2022 report has flagged the devastating effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on childhood cancer detection and diagnosis. Many poor parents abandoned treatment due to a shortage of blood products and chemotherapy agents. For many others, treatment stopped abruptly because of the complete closure of paediatric cancer care services. Across most tertiary and secondary hospitals childhood cancer care services were severely affected after they were turned into Covid hospitals. It led to a decrease in detecting new cases, interruptions in radiotherapy, and a lesser number of surgeries.

The report also stated that childhood cancers comprise 4 per cent of all reported cancers in the national cancer registry programme. Most children with cancer suffer from leukemia (approximately 33 per cent) followed by brain tumors (around 20 per cent) and lymphomas (some 11 per cent). Fewer children in India survive cancer compared to developed countries. There are many “missed cases” too due to low coverage, lack of awareness, delayed diagnosis, and a fledgling electronic referral system. These patients face delayed diagnosis resulting in delayed treatment, incomplete treatment and therefore, low survival rate. As national health programmes and policies are focused on cancers in adults, the ICMR report has suggested that a special policy framework is developed to address childhood cancer.

The ICMR report has highlighted that childhood cancer is curable if detected early, but unfortunately, cases are not detected on time due to a lack of trained doctors and nurses, or parents being late in seeking medical help. Many parents leave the treatment of their child midway due to high costs, regular long-term follow-ups, and a lack of referral hospitals, equipment and medicines. There is a need to create awareness among the public and also general physicians and primary care providers about childhood cancer symptoms and signs so that it is detected on time.



INTERNATIONAL PATIENT SAFETY CONFERENCE 2023

The 9th Edition of the International Patient Safety Conference (IPSC) and the 10th International Conference on Transforming Healthcare with Information Technology (THIT) was organized by Apollo Hospitals in Delhi on February 13 and 14 2023. Every year this event marks the congregation of the global thought leaders, industry experts and healthcare practitioners sharing their experiences, best practices and new innovative approaches to patient safety. This year, more than 2000 delegates from 30 countries participated.

The theme this year was 'Dream, Design, Dare' and was centred on the "Butterfly effect in action", examining different aspects of Digital Health along with accompanying standards and policies. It was supported by different endorsing partners and national organisations such as the National Health Authority (Govt. of India), the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, the Indian Medical Association, leading universities, and several other Government organisations. Organisations like WHO, IITs, AIIMS Delhi, Indian Institute of Science, faculty from several overseas universities, and established MNCs also participated in the conference. Additionally, start-ups

from Innovative Centres of Excellence working on Make in India for the world projects, encompassing Digital Health, also showcased their products. The Conference provides a forum for all interested parties to discuss best practices for enhancing patient safety, which is a crucial component of healthcare delivery.

The panel of speakers included Shri Parameswaran Iyer, CEO, NITI Aayog; Dr. Atul Mohan Kochhar, CEO, NABH India; Shri Sadhguru, global thought leader; Dr. Neelam Dhingra, Head, WHO Patient Safety Flagship Initiative, Geneva, Switzerland, Dr Jonathan Perlin, President and CEO, The Joint Commission, USA; Dr. Keheliya Rambukwella, Hon'ble Minister of Health, Sri Lanka among many others. The key message at the conference was that as India moves closer to achieving universal health coverage, patient safety and digital health should be given high consideration. The aim is to foster discussions around safety of care, healthcare policy, nursing technology, to build a more secure and effective ecosystem for healthcare delivery, incorporating the latest technologies to increase reach.

AI USHERING IN NEW BREAKTHROUGHS IN CARE: GLOBAL DATA

The 2023-24 Union Budget announced the establishment of three artificial intelligence (AI) centers of excellence as part of “Make AI for India” and “Make AI work for India” initiatives. According to GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, this could usher in a new era of breakthroughs in patient care by powering a new generation of systems that provide clinicians with smart tools and devices when providing care. GlobalData believes the Budget announcement could have an extraordinary impact on the medical device sector that can change the face of healthcare. The medical device industry in India is expanding and innovating, with researchers and manufacturers attempting to integrate accuracy with automation. The medical devices market in India is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of over 5% through 2030.

AI is now being widely used across the healthcare value chain - from the management of chronic diseases such as diabetes and intelligent documentation in the form of electronic health records, to AI-assisted surgeries with surgical robots. From being present as an idea in a controlled test environment these applications are now turning into full-fledged production systems. AI-based medical devices will now become part of treatment with a surfeit of applications including medical imaging of complex diseases including cancer and patient monitoring with wearable smart devices.



Medical devices with AI are set to transform the healthcare industry by assisting medical professionals in accurately and effectively diagnosing and treating as well as improving the overall care of patients. Thanks to AI, robots of today are now autonomous, flexible, with ability to self-learn through machine learning and deep learning techniques. Surgeons want robots to monitor any change in the operating rooms, detect errors, and react to emergencies. AI in diagnosis and medical imaging will play an important role in the treatment of diseases, particularly cancer. Better imaging can help doctors to monitor tumors and the spread of cancer cells and will transform the types of treatments patients receive. Overall, technology holds promise for improving patient outcomes, increasing safety, and reducing costs associated with healthcare delivery as per Global Data.



ECONOMIC SURVEY 2022-23: KEY HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

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The key mantra to innovations in health is to use technology in an innovative manner and develop cost-effective strategies. India is an epicentre for varied innovations and this has been proved beyond doubt during the pandemic with world-class vaccinations and healthcare applications being developed here.

- **Dr Randeep Guleria, President, AIIMS**
Bilaspur and Chairman, Institute of Internal
Medicine, Respiratory & Sleep Medicine.

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India's budgeted expenditure on the health sector reached 2.1% of the GDP in 2022-23 while the revised estimate the year before was 2.2% of the GDP, according to the Economic Survey 2023. In comparison, the Centre and state governments spent 1.6% of the GDP on health in 2020-21. The share of expenditure on health in the total expenditure on social services increased from 21% in 2018-19 to 26% in 2022-23. According to the Economic Survey, the goal of attaining the highest possible level of health and well-being for all through a preventive and promotive healthcare orientation which are affordable as envisaged in the National Health Policy, 2017, would be achieved through increasing access, improving quality, and lowering the cost of healthcare delivery. It has recommended increasing the Government's health expenditure to 2.5% cent of GDP by 2025.

While the expenditure on health was 1.3% of the GDP in 2015-16, it rose by only 0.1% in the next fiscal and stayed there for the four years before rising to 1.6% 2020-21. Almost half of all health spending in India is still paid by patients themselves directly at the point of treatment, although this has dropped as

the government's share of spending on health went up significantly after 2013-14. The pre-budget survey noted that many multidimensional initiatives like Mission Indradhanush, Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat, COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, Ayushman Digital Mission, have been launched and carried forward for better overall health of the citizens. The Survey also gave an outlook of the non-life insurance sector, especially health insurance, across India over the past year. The demand for health coverage in the aftermath of the Covid -19 pandemic has and is likely to boost the growth in the non-life insurance sector. Important government initiatives, strong demographic factors, a conducive regulatory environment, product innovations, and vibrant distribution channels are now supporting the insurance market's growth.

Under the Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana, approximately 21.9 crore beneficiaries have been verified, but this is less than 50% of the originally targeted approximately 50 crore beneficiaries. Till January 2023, over 31.11 crore digital health IDs have been created and the health records of over 7.52 crore people have been linked with the IDs. Nearly two lakh facilities have been verified on the health facility registry and over 1.23 lakh healthcare professionals have been verified on the healthcare professional registry.



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