



THE INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION (IPA)

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MISSION

The Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) is the national professional body of pharmacists engaged in various facets of the profession of pharmacy. The IPA is committed to promote the highest professional and ethical standards of pharmacy, focus the image of pharmacists as competent healthcare professionals, sensitize the community, government and others on vital professional issues and support pharmaceutical education and sciences in all aspects.

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The Director,
Directorate of Health Services,
Govt. of Goa.

Dated : 2nd December, 2011

Sub : Anomalies in dispensing liquid dosage forms in Govt. hospitals

Ma'am,

This is to bring to your kind notice that we have observed, and also obtained additional feedback that :

1. In the hospitals/PHCs, etc. under the DHS, Paracetamol suspension, Tercoff Syrup and even NSND (Normal Saline Nose Drops) are dispensed from large containers/gallons into smaller bottles at the level of the hospital/PHCs.
2. Unfortunately, these bottles are not supplied by the hospital, but brought in by the patients.
3. And, unfortunately, it is a fact that these bottles which the patients bring in are of a large variety –
 - a. empty bottles brought from the house, empty bottles picked up from the wayside, empty soft drink bottles – including 1 or 2 litre bottles to collect medicine/syrup of quantities of 60 ml or even 10ml (for NSND).
 - b. The cleanliness of these bottles is very much questionable many times. Many times, the patients spend money to buy a bottle of mineral water or soft drink, or badam milk, etc., from nearby shops/canteen, drink it/share it to finish it, and without rinsing come to the pharmacy for getting the bottle filled with the prescribed dose of Paracetamol or Tercoff Syrup.
4. Large populaces who avail services from public hospitals are not well to do, and can little afford to purchase and "create" such empty bottles to take home "free" medicine. Often, they come from far and wide, and are unable to go back also to bring any bottle from their homes.

Besides the logistics and troubles for the patients, the other serious problem is as under :

1. The variety of bottles brought in by patients are not of pharmaceutical grade, and thus some of the ingredients from the liquid dosage form can get absorbed/adsorbed into/onto the bottle, or material/chemicals from the bottle and or cap/container can leach out into the liquid, thus causing harm to the patient.
2. Since the bottles are not always thoroughly cleaned, the ingredients in these bottles can interfere/interact with the ingredients in the liquid dosage form/medicine.
3. Shelf life of the medicine depends upon type of pack. If the pack is other than the original pack given by the manufacturer then there is no guarantee about quality of product repacked.

These, thus according to us are serious lapses and very bad dispensing practices, which are detrimental to the health of patients.

In the best interest of patients, we feel that this practice should be stopped **immediately**, and :

- a. Till the existing stocks last, arrangements should be done by the DHS to procure pharma grade empty bottles of suitable sizes, and the dispensing be done using these bottles, along with proper labeling, indicating name of the product, batch number, expiry date, etc. as per the legal requirements.
- b. Urgent steps should be taken to ensure that the procurement from the manufacturers for these products should be in the form of pre-packed sealed bottles of required quantities, as is done for so many other liquid dosage forms (like Susp. Cotrimoxazole, Albendazole susp., Syrup B.Complex, Scablin lotion, etc.).
- c. Products (like NSND), which are compounded in the hospital should be packed and dispensed in proper quality dispensing bottles, with clear and adequate labeling.

We hope that you will take serious note of the above, and initiate quick action in public interest. The Indian Pharmaceutical Association is willing to help the Govt. to sort out such and various other medicine handling issues, for which you are welcome to approach us.

Sincerely Yours,



Raj Vaidya

Chairman,

IPA – Community Pharmacy Division