

Letter to the Editor

Date: 05.03.2010

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for publishing the letter to the Editor of Dr. Jayant B. Dave. I never seen such a letter dealing with an important social issue published in this Journal. I must congratulate Dr. Dave for raising this important issue.

It is really a great concern that pharma companies are taking different unethical measures to promote their medicines in collusion with the Doctors, which is putting an additional burden to the patients, resulting in inaccessibility to the medicines. A recent study reveals that a sizable percentage of our population going behind the poverty levels and never coming out of it due to out of pocket (OOP) health care expenses and the three-fourths of OOP is spent on drugs as estimated by the 55th consumption expenditure survey.

Our country has no comprehensive legislation to curb this unethical competition. Recently the MCI has notified the "Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009 - Part-I", which is very elaborate one, but unfortunately the point (g) has nullified the spirit of the regulation. This provision left much scope to circumvent the entire legislation.

One more issue is that the toothless age old "Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisement) Act 1954 failed to restrict unethical advertisement to mislead the general public. This act needs immediate amendment in consonance with the prevailing socio-economic status.

In this connection I would like to mention one recommendation made in the "**Kolkata Declaration - 2005**" Adopted in the National Seminar on Pharmaceutical Policy and Access to Essential Medicines Kolkata on 16-17 April, 2005 , which is -

"Drug Promotion:

1. A National Ethics Committee on Promotion of Medicines (NECPM) in which there is adequate representative of civil society organisations should be formed to monitor all promotional efforts
2. A code of ethics for marketing of medicines should be adopted by NECPM and made obligatory for all the manufacturers.
3. All promotional materials for health professionals should be screened and approved by NECPM and all advertisements in the regional press be scrutinized and approved by a state level Ethical Promotion Committee.
4. Gifts except minor items, inducements, sponsoring of meetings and entertainment of the members of the medical profession and those who are related to drug prescription, purchase etc by drug companies should be banned so that these do not influence prescribing practices.
5. Drug companies should contribute funds to the drug control authority for the conduct of Continuing Medical Education programme for doctors
6. A cap on drug promotional expenditure drug companies should be fixed and enforced. "

Implementation of this recommendation may be an effective tool to resolve this problem.

Thanking you once again and with best regards.

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Proposed IPA Building

Appeal for IPA Building Fund

The President of Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA)
appeals to all members of IPA to contribute minimum of Rs. 1000/-
towards the proposed IPA building at **Mumbai.**

Kindly send your contribution through D/D or local cheque in favour of "**IPA Building Fund**"
on the following address.

Executive Secretary,

Indian Pharmaceutical Association

C/o. Bombay College of Pharmacy, Kalina, Santacruz (E), Mumbai 400098.

All donations towards this fund will get tax exemption u/s 80G of Income Tax Act.